

WHY WE LOST  
SINGAPORE

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

England's Purpose

England—Mightier Yet

The Commonsense of Christianity

Aprons of Fig Leaves (a novel)

etc.

DOROTHY CRISP,



WHY WE LOST  
SINGAPORE

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE<sup>1</sup>

*My life is devoted to the British Empire*

*In December, 1942, in order to express my political views, I began to write a weekly article for the Sunday Dispatch, and continued until November, 1943*

*At the instance of an Australian I wrote frequently about the Pacific war. The result was that very many men, home from the East for long or very brief periods, and possessed of real knowledge, found their way to my sitting-room. They were diplomats, soldiers and civilians*

*This book is the result*

*It is dedicated to all the men who tried to stop the rot and to one in particular*

*The publication of the information it contains is imperative if hundreds of thousands more British subjects are not to be marched into Japanese prison camps in the future, and if we are to regain our Far Eastern Empire, with all that it means to us.*

DOROTHY CRISP.

"The time has now come in which every Englishman expects to be informed of the national affairs, and in which he has a right to have that expectation gratified. For whatever may be urged by Ministers, or those whom vanity or interest make the followers of Ministers, concerning the necessity of confidence in our Governors, and the presumption of prying with profane eyes into the recesses of policy, it is evident that this reverence can be claimed only by councils yet unexecuted, and projects suspended in deliberation

"But when a design has ended in miscarriage or success, and every ear is witness to general discontent, or general satisfaction it is then a proper time to disentangle confusion and illustrate obscurity, to shew by what causes every event was produced, and in what effects it is likely to terminate, to lay down with distinct particularity what rumour always muddles in general exclamation or perplexes by indigested narratives, to shew whence happiness or calamity is derived, and whence it may be expected, and honestly to lay before the people what enquiry can gather of the past, and conjecture can estimate of the future "

DOCTOR SAMUEL JOHNSON

("Observation on the Present State of Affairs," 1756)

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# WHY WE LOST SINGAPORE

## I

### THE UNDERLYING CAUSE

AT Hongkong in 1937 we belatedly built a military airfield whose purpose was the defence of the Colony. It was situated on the mainland out of range of our own guns, so that any enemy who possessed it could not be attacked by the defenders of the island and, just to make assurance doubly sure, it was so situated that there was a hill between the guns and the airfield. Army officers who were in Hongkong at the time of the construction of the airfield said that it was simply a present for the Japs and advised those in the Colonial Service to insure their pensions. It would have been possible to make an airfield on the island, though at enormous cost, the sort of cost that a Government sanctions without a second's thought in wartime (when it is too late), and dare not contemplate in peace time if it keeps one eye on the pacifist vote.

A glance at the map of the Far East—one glance alone—will show anyone that the land defence of Malaya was impossible unless Siam were in our control or unless Siam were friendly to us. Siam, merely by her geographical position, is the key to the Far East, yet the Foreign Office removed the one Intelligence Officer who tried to act on this fact, kept him under arrest in Singapore for seventeen days, and had him escorted to a homeward-bound ship without opportunity to state his case to anyone save General Percival, who said that he could do nothing.

According to the *Times*, when our retreat down the Malayan Peninsula had been in progress for three weeks, Mr Churchill, at a Press Conference in Ottawa, "expressed in unequivocal terms confidence that Singapore could be held against Japanese attacks."

More, Lord Moyne, the Colonial Secretary, told a peer of political importance, who put a question to him privately three days before the fall of Hongkong: "Oh yes, we expect to hold it. We don't know of any reason why we shouldn't."

The peer to whom he said this told me

These, and many hundreds of incidents like these are, as we shall see, all part of the story of the loss of Singapore; Singapore, where, Lord Roberts had warned us, the history of the world would one day be decided. But though this detail is more interesting to the average mind, and is of great importance in the necessary assessment of blame and removal of power from the hands which have misused it, the underlying cause of our loss of Singapore is no one incident or accumulation of incidents. The fundamental cause of our loss of Singapore is an attitude of mind.

Ten days before the fall of Singapore I was present at a meeting of Ministry of Information speakers gathered in the County Hall, London, to confer together and to hear an "expert" from the Foreign Office on the situation in the Far East. For two years I gave my services to the Ministry of Information as a voluntary speaker, and these conferences were held every now and then that the officials might inform themselves of the state of mind we had found in the country. That meeting began by the foreign Office "expert" having difficulty in finding Sourabaya on the map, though that port in the Dutch Indies was the only one of use to our naval vessels once the Singapore Docks were unsafe. The next performance of the expert was to instruct us not to use the words "Empire" and "Imperialism" in public speeches about the Far East as that might offend our Chinese Ally. I remarked that we had got into this mess through appeasing our enemies and that if now we were to start appeasing our friends, God alone knew what would happen; and that I for one always had and always would refer to the Empire on every conceivable occasion. Then the various speakers began to give their opinions on the situation in the Far East and there were none more practical than that of an Irish-Australian who, after speaking for a long time, earnestly remarked.

"After all, there is a case in mysticism for Neo-Shintorism."

Whereupon my voice, at its most incisive, cut into his next sentence.

"Mr Chairman, at the risk of being extremely rude, there are 100,000 Japs outside Singapore and the only thing that the hard-headed British public is interested in at all is what the hell the Government is going to do about it!"

After that the meeting came alive and at the end of it the Foreign Office expert came to me very apologetically, and said

that he had not realised what would be required of him, or he would have come differently prepared!

That story is the story of the fall of Singapore in miniature. So certain were the citizens of the British Empire of the Empire's eternal security that, with 100 000 enemy troops at the very gates of one of its greatest citadels, they were quite certain they could still go on assessing the moral values of their opponents and being super-polite towards any Ally. No one, moreover, realised the preciousness of the British Empire until a part of it was (temporarily) lost.

Again absolutely typical of this attitude of mind, which must be eradicated before we attempt to regain the Far East, is an account of my conversations with the Foreign Office, the Conservative Central Office and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, in February, 1943. In that month there was an important debate in the House of Lords on our future position in the air and Lord Londonderry, on whose initiative it took place, asked me to attend. During that debate Viscount Bennett, the former Prime Minister of Canada, who has a great knowledge of the aircraft industry stated that the United States had seriously hindered our aviation development in the Pacific before this war by prohibiting the use of their landing-grounds in the Hawaiian Islands and that Pan-American Airways recently protested against our use of aircraft in our own West Indies.

What transpired in this House of Lords debate, conducted by men of great practical knowledge, was that we were building fighter and light bombing aircraft, and no transport aircraft at all, so that we are winning the war for the civilised world but at the end of the war would be a non-starter in the air-race for communications and trade. The United States, on the other hand is building transport aircraft at such a rate that one peer estimated its production in the following twelve months at 20 000 transport 'planes while another Member of their Lordships' House quoted a publication, "American Aviation," to show how one American aviation company alone had quadrupled its employees in the previous twelve months.

(I may here say that a few weeks before this debate I had discussed the question of transport aircraft with a leading English aircraft designer. A friend of his had been over one of the American transport 'planes and our designer asked him "What difference is there between the American civil trans-

port 'plane and their war transport 'plane?' After a tremendous mental effort and terrific racking of his brains, the friend replied 'Well, they've taken the air-stewardesses out' )

Nothing is more obvious than that only by a great Empire Air Service can we develop the Empire economically, bind it even closer politically and be ever-prepared in its defence. And for that Empire Air Service nothing is more important than the possession of Pacific Islands as air-bases. I determined to write an article in the *Sunday Dispatch* on the whole subject (and in that article I described how Lord Sherwood, replying in the debate for the Government, said nothing at all in a great many words and while he spoke rubbed his hands together in a washing motion remarkably reminiscent of Pontius Pilate )

As I left the House of Lords, I recalled that some time in the 1930's to my great anger, we had ceded the sovereignty of a British Island or Islands in the Pacific to the United States and I determined to bring out this fact in my article as typical of the way in which the grand reality of the British Empire had been slipping from hands grown fat and nerveless, before this war began.

Owing to the difficulties of wartime I had not all my papers in London and to check up the exact detail I first of all rang the Conservative Central Office and asked them to consult their library. As that got me nowhere I went down to Old Queen Street. There I spent an exhausting three hours while they attempted to persuade me first that I must have a muddled recollection of the remarkable transaction by which, in 1940 we permitted American use of British Empire bases in return for fifty old destroyers, and when I scouted that with derision that the whole thing had never happened at all. I finally persuaded them that it had and that they must go on looking and also ring the Royal Institute of International Affairs who ought to be able to put their finger on it at once.

The Royal Institute of International Affairs on which hundreds of thousands of public money is spent professed blank ignorance and was urged to look and promised to do so after several people had separately urged them. I went away and rang up the Foreign Office and explained what I wanted. Altering their names (in the kindness of my heart) I was put on to Mr Smith who thought it was really Mr Brown's department that I wanted. Mr Brown was quite certain that

Mr. Robinson could tell me, and would have me put on to him Mr. Robinson had no recollection but thought that Mr Jones might have, and it is the exact fact that I was passed to four men, none of whom knew anything about it, before I got a fifth who had a vague recollection that I was right, and that something had happened—could he ring me in the morning?

The next morning the Conservative Central Office beat the Foreign Office by twenty minutes. The Conservative Central Office had discovered the details of the transaction and expressed their surprise at learning of it. The Foreign Office had tracked it down with some labour and added more detail. The Royal Institute of International Affairs never did telephone and is presumably still looking

And that is the general attitude which cost us Singapore. In my *Dispatch* article I began

"When the Mediterranean was the centre of civilisation the world's leaders were Greece and Rome. Now the scene has shifted to the Pacific, and Japan stands on the pivot of the world, we have opportunities given by heaven, advantages given by nature and national unity."

"That is an extract from a Japanese Army pamphlet and although we may be certain that the opportunities have been given to them from the exactly opposite address, they have certainly got hold of the right idea about the Pacific."

I then had various things to say about the many highly placed Americans who were demanding that the British Empire should give them various Naval and Air Bases in the Pacific, and I continued "Furthermore these aspirants in the Pacific, seem to forget that that ocean is so ringed about and dotted with British territory as to be, in effect, a British Imperial lake. Canada, our Far Eastern Empire, Australia and New Zealand, with the Solomon Islands, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, the Phoenix Islands, the New Hebrides, the Fiji Islands, Pitcairn Island and others all beneath the Union Jack, girdle the Pacific, and though Japan is now in possession of our Far Eastern Empire great will be her fall and certain is its restoration."

"But in 1938 there was a curious incident concerning our Phoenix Island group. The Islands are named Birnie, McKean, Canton, Enderbury, Phoenix, Hull, Sidney and Gardner, and the United States decided to question our sovereignty over

Canton and Enderbury. One of His Majesty's ships was therefore sent to hoist the Union Jack once more upon them, but in April, 1939 we were so obliging as to agree to joint administration of these two islands which were to be used for civil aviation, the question of sovereignty being left in abeyance while we (for some mysterious reason) make payments to the United States'

This consideration on our part contrasts oddly with the impertinent demands of Pan-American Airways in the British West Indies, as oddly as Lord Strabolgi's statement in "Singapore—and After" contrasts with the attitude of the political party of which he is a member

On page 55 Lord Strabolgi says

'It is curious that the senior members of the British Civil Service, all of whom have had a classical education, do not pay more attention to history. They might learn some lessons from the Roman Empire. The Romans raised the bulk of their Legions from the non-Italian populations; they were recruited locally and the officers could and did rise to the highest positions in the Empire, including that of Emperor. But every inhabitant of a country absorbed into the Roman Empire became automatically a citizen, with full rights and privileges. Paul the Jew, was proud to claim his Roman citizenship. In theory, this has been the practice of the British Empire.'

Lord Strabolgi goes on to say how well we have made the inhabitants of West Africa conscious of their citizenship of the British Empire and yet he says, we failed to do that, or even to attempt it, with the Malays, Chinese and Indians of Malaya

How right he is to denounce any failure to promote Empire-consciousness!

But the Labour Party was busy *denouncing* the British Empire to the children of England between the wars. Why then should a member of the Labour Party choose to denounce the British Civil Service for simply ignoring the fact of the British Empire in lands far distant from its Home? (And did they do so?)

In the summer of 1943 the Australian Minister, Dr. Evatt, was in London. While talking to a group of Australians here he said that the Labour Party knew nothing and cared nothing for the British Empire, and that their attitude was enough to

drive the Dominions out of it. A well-known Australian journalist came to me with this information, and urged me to attack the Labour Party in one of my *Dispatch* articles for its ignorance of the British Empire. I retorted that I had been attacking them for ten years, but that they were too stupid to improve. Whereupon he urged: "Well, attack them again, and see!"

On the 22nd of August, 1943, the following paragraphs appeared in my article:

"It is the fact that increasing consciousness of the fundamental importance of the Empire finds new expression every day. During the last two months my post-bag has contained a steadily increasing number of letters from people who say either that they are members of the Labour Party but that that party is so ignorant about the Empire that they are very worried, or that their views are 'Left' but they cannot join the Labour Party because its fatuous attitude towards the Empire is a menace

"Moreover, 'Left' persons from the Dominions have lately informed me that they are sick to death of the Labour Party in this country and cannot co-operate with it because it knows less of the Empire than of the Man in the Moon."

A short time later there began to be references to the Empire by various members of the Labour Party, and Mr. Shinwell wrote a perfectly reasonable article about it in the *Evening Standard*. After this new move had been in progress a few months, Sir Alfred Beit said in the House of Commons that the Labour Party's discovery of the British Empire was the greatest discovery since the days of Vasco da Gama.

But it came too late to save Singapore.

Between ignorance of the Empire and complacency concerning it, the general attitude was simply that the Empire was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. We vainly imagined that the twentieth century knew better than the Bible. We chose to forget that "When a strong man armed keepeth his house his goods are in peace."

And then our imaginations built up for us the security of which our pacifism, our lack of Imperialism had robbed us. We began to talk about Singapore as if it were a fortress, when it was no more than a heavily defended Naval Base. We were indignant to the point of fury that men selected for

their adherence to the prim Service (Civil or otherwise) conventions of 1919-39 did not behave like a combination of Drake Nelson and Kipling

In Malayan Postscript Mr Ian Morrison accurately said: People had sheltered not behind the Naval Base but behind the defensive concept of which the Base was the chief visible expression. Other people had done the same behind the Maginot Line.

I had myself noted this attitude some years before when I wrote in a National Review article that we were gaily breaking up our Navy in an unconscious certainty that its very shade would protect us.

This certainty of security is fully evident in the speeches of every Minister who commented on our Far East campaigns while they were in being. Mr Churchill's statement already quoted is no more than typical. But there was another cause for this than ignorance and complacency concerning the British Empire. Our Ministers were mainly elderly men and all had minds centred in Europe yet were trying to run a world wide Empire. In consequence their views were out of focus and their decisions faulty.

It is the business of the Foreign Secretary and the Foreign Office to keep the Cabinet whether in peace or war informed as to world events and what do we find Lord Vansittart—for so long a permanent head of the Foreign Office—saying at the end of his book *The Lessons of my Life*?

He begins the last paragraph of his book thus:

‘I come to the final and all-important lesson. Unless we can learn to think and feel in European terms Europe will ultimately go her way without us. Other influences will oust ours and we shall be headed for the worst form of isolation—the dislike and the distrust of our neighbours. That would be a calamity for us and for Europe.’

So the final and all important lesson to Lord Vansittart is Europe Europe and more Europe. Europe where England has not an inch of territory save the few miles of the Rock of Gibraltar and not the Pacific round which the British Empire mainly centres. If we are to judge from Lord Vansittart to the Foreign Office both the Asiatic land mass and the vast Pacific Ocean are out of sight and out of mind. That is certainly the impression I have had when I have had occasion to require information from that department.



No wonder we lost Singapore

The Foreign Office is, as we shall see, largely culpable but not, as is often alleged, because it is an aristocratic preserve. What we are suffering from—suffering from terribly—is not an aristocracy, of which we have very little left, but a nepotism, a collection of people who promote dear old So-and-so, once in, and hang together lest they should hang separately. It is notorious that the new man is ever worse than the scion of an old family in jealousy for the privileges of his position, and the desire to keep a closed ring and certainly one of the most culpable persons with regard to the loss of Singapore. Sir Josiah Crosby, our Minister in Bangkok, was educated at a Grammar School and served a long apprenticeship as vice-consul. So, too, Lord Moyne, then Secretary for the Colonies, whose complacency on some occasions was matched only by his arrogance on others, was until a short time ago Benjamin Guinness. An aristocracy may be, in fact almost invariably is, a patron of the brilliant and the adventurous but such patronage is very definitely not the function of a bureaucrat climbing to the top of the tree. Nor are money standards the well-spring of that spirit of *noblesse oblige* which is at once the hall-mark and only justification of aristocracy.

In the last twenty years, as I have frequently pointed out lately, only those who have made themselves pleasant have been promoted, either in the Services or in politics. For England, this island with a unique record of providing political genius, has twice in her history failed so to do. The first time was that period during the reign of George III when we lost the American Colonies and the second time has been throughout the last forty years. The Great increase the animation of all about them and not least that of their opponents and critics, but little men depress, depress what brilliance exists as the one means of increasing their own luminosity. The great will have little to do with rigid control, and nothing to do with red tape. But when a great Empire has been for forty years without great leadership the resultant system of nepotism and bureaucracy forms a rigid and restrictive crust through which it is well-nigh impossible to break.

It is little wonder that a vast increase of Civil Servants heralded the downfall of the Roman Empire, and we of late years have more and more tended to put the Empire into the wrong hands.

A man from the Dominions hurled a couple of startling sentences down my telephone some eighteen months ago. He said 'There are still some people in England who don't realise what the Empire is. It's crude, passionate, affectionate—and brutal, and until they do realise that we shall get nowhere.'

And as I afterwards considered this violent exclamation, I recalled the pronouncement a very *pukka* War Office Colonel had made to me only a few days before. 'I sometimes think the people in the Dominions have bred truer to the old stock than we have at home.'

For, of course, those four words, with the addition of England's great and unique law and the brilliance of our sixteenth century literature, sum up the whole of Elizabethan England—the England which cradled the Empire and has yet to know her 'finest hour.'

In 1940 we were great (as we were great before the menace, just as immediate, of Philip of Spain and Napoleon) but we were great in defence. All save the merely craven will fight and die in defence of their own field and hearth, but the greater test is to be not one whit less valiant and determined far away in offence. The real test, the test of world-wide offensive, with the recapture of our Far Eastern Empire as its main objective, has still to come upon us. Let us therefore consider what this Empire is for which we fight, and but for which none would now be fighting.

Elizabeth's England founded it all. On 5th August, 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert stood on the shores of Newfoundland and set up the arms of England in the name of his august Queen. In the next year Sir Walter Raleigh 'occupied' Virginia and England possessed her first land on the North American Continent. In 1600 the Queen granted a Charter to the East India Company and the history of our Far Eastern Empire began. For the history of our Eastern Empire is the history of Elizabethan England carried late into the nineteenth century. The East India Company, our merchant adventurers, in the course of centuries acquired vast territories in India which were not taken over by the Home Government until 1858. In Malaya and in China directly or indirectly they contributed to the same end, and there, too, the Home Government only took over in the mid-nineteenth century.

Inevitably, once in the hands of politicians the whole thing became more formal and less vital. However good a civil

servant is, he has neither the crude but effective initiative and method, nor the passion for life of an adventurer—nor has he the same ability to cope with the Japanese. It could never have been written of the East India Company as it was written by Mr. Ian Morrison in 'Malayan Postscript' in 1942 "Singapore was crying out for leadership. Promotion in the Services in Malaya was by seniority. It was difficult for an ambitious young man to cut out the lower rungs on the ladder of fame. There is nothing so deadening to the personality as security."

But always there was one great difference between our Eastern Empire and the Dominions and many of the Colonies. Our people went to the Dominions to found families and build new nations, where their tremendous efforts to conquer raw Continents kept them direct and simple, Elizabethan in mould. Our men went to our Eastern Empire to accomplish great things, to build great individual fortunes, but most of them came back to England to die and that looser tie explains something at least of this war's history.

In Elizabeth's day love of country and of freedom indeed were passions—and has aught less carried the British triumphantly through more than four years of this war? Elizabethan plays may still be cut for our tender ears and the Peace Ballot marked beyond question the sloppiest sentimentality of all time, but the people in our heavily bombed areas and our merchantseamen, among others of our population, are keenly aware of the essential and eternal brutality of life. Only throughout the official crust does the namby-pamby of the 1930's still linger. But that constitutes the real danger—that must go! In the world of today there is neither time nor place for so much as one word lacking in virility. To smash Japan we must mount a tremendous offensive and, though the Elizabethan spirit and more than the Elizabethan spirit throughout the Empire is ready for it, it cannot be voiced by the Pips, Squeaks and Wilfreds of our Foreign and Colonial Offices in particular, and the bureaucratic mind in general.

We lost Singapore because we failed to teach our fellow-subjects Imperialism. We lost Singapore because we failed to remember that but two things are constant in this world: the facts of human nature and the facts of geography. Instead, we adopted the ludicrous Victorian theory of moral progress and decided that the world would be pretty-pretty for ever.

more. We forsook Christianity without having the guts to forsake religion altogether, and arrived at the ridiculous point of pouring adulation upon certain by-products of Christian belief while ceasing to possess any vital spark of faith in the Christian God, thus we became mere humanitarians. The true visionary is also a hard-headed realist; your mere sentimentalist is an unpractical fool. And the fools have had their way.

The Press Attache of the Polish Embassy in Tokyo—Alexander Piskor—was imprisoned by the Japanese when they went to war with us. They accused him of being a great friend of Churchill whom he had never seen, and threatened him with torture in order to induce him to account for his and his secretary's frequent visits to the British Embassy in Tokyo. He was kept in solitary confinement for months until his health broke down, and he told me that almost the only thing he had to read was a Bible which he read right through twice. "And you know," he said, "the verse about 'What king going to war against another king sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he be able with 10 000 to meet him that cometh with 20 000'." When I read that I thought, "And the English read their Bible!"

But the simple and effective practicality of the Four Gospels is quite beyond either the 20th century bureaucrat or the 20th century intellectual. And do the English read their Bible? When I quoted, "When a strong man armed keepeth his house his goods are in peace," the editor of the *Sunday Dispatch* said to me "That is a good quotation. Where does it come from?"

We lost Singapore because in high places there was neither the alertness of mind, nor the imagination, to rouse us from our sense of security in time. Far worse than that, there was a moral cowardice which deliberately turned from every disquieting fact. There was a mentality in the whole country which believed that it could belittle our fathers and their methods, while still enjoying what they and their methods had won for us. There was the pacifist living sleekly on the sword beaten not into anything so useful as a plough-share but into a cheap make of car (riding in which he could blandly ignore the fact that the casualties from motor-cars in the reign of King George V exceeded the casualties of the 1914-18 War, and that Mr Noel-Baker Parliamentary Secretary to the

Ministry of War Transport, stated in the House of Commons on 5th May, 1944. "Take the total of killed and wounded together. On the fighting fronts the total as a result of all the efforts of Hitler's War Machine is 370,000, and on the roads it is 588 000 since the war began")

It cannot be repeated too often. A false sense of security, European mentality, bureaucratic nepotism, a sentimentalised idealism and the complete ignoring of the facts of human nature and geography—these were the underlying causes of our loss of Singapore

## II

### THE EUROPEAN MIND IN RELATION TO THE STRATEGY OF THIS WAR'

#### SUPPLIES TO RUSSIA

**W**HEN England declared war on Germany on 3rd September, 1939, the most ludicrous theory of all time reigned.

It was that, owing to modern inventions, defence was stronger than offence, and there is no doubt at all that the Chamberlain Government envisaged a war of slow strangulation rather than violence. That Government informed British manufacturers that it was planning for a three-years war and that if the factories reached peak of production by September, 1941, all would be well. It omitted to bomb either Berlin at the beginning of the war or the German troops when they were switched west from Poland. It dropped bits of paper on the heads of what the B.B.C. consistently informed us until the invasion of Holland and Belgium in 1940 were good Germans. Above all, it placed reliance on France and still believed her to be a first-class military power in spite of the fact that France did not declare war until six hours after we had done so and was trying to get out of it, and in spite of journalistic evidence when the war had been in progress for a few months as to the state of French arms and the morale of the French Army.

No one in the British War Cabinet had the least idea of the rottenness of France and that applied equally to the Churchill Government which succeeded the Chamberlain Government in May 1940 after dramatic scenes in the House of Commons which culminated in Mr Amery pointing to Neville Chamberlain while he declaimed In the Name of God go! Mr Winston Churchill in fact was one of France's warmest supporters and was actually in the train prepared to go and argue with her Cabinet yet again when the news of her capitulation in violation of her pledged word reached him. The whole disposition of our Forces had of course been made in conjunction with those of France. Not only had we consequently no foothold on the Continent but our naval positions in the Mediterranean and our armies in the Near East were menaced. The fate of France's Colonies was all-important to us and before long after the Governor of French Indo-China had unavailingly asked both the British Empire and the United States for arms with which to resist Indo-China fell neatly into the hands of Japan with whom the Vichy Government agreed to allow access for many thousands of troops.

It is absurd merely to say it was a position of tremendous difficulty but it is I think fair to say that in face of it the wrong decision was made. Mr Churchill and Lord Beaverbrook agreed that Hitler could not win unless he could obtain possession of this island of England therefore the thing to do was to concentrate on the defence of this island to keep men in it and to issue 14 million leaflets in 1941 telling the populace what to do if invasion came. Now while it was obviously true that Hitler could not win this war unless he successfully invaded England it is also true that to take that fact as the starting point for the strategy of the war was to continue the mistake of the Chamberlain Government. Our elderly politicians were still thinking defensively and as Jacky Fisher said - Rashness in war is prudence prudence in war is imbecility.

From this premise of defence and this concentration on the basic idea of keeping the war at all costs out of England sprang a reinforcement of the already existing European mentality. According to this view nothing was more important than a land front against Germany in Europe and so developed what I believe to be an altogether exaggerated value placed on the idea of keeping Russia in the war once she was attacked. For my own part as I stated in 1940 I did not then believe nor

do I now believe that there was ever a possibility of Hitler successfully invading this island or, indeed, of invading it at all on any scale, and the observations of journalists who were in Europe at the time certainly bear out the belief that our people thought a great deal more of invasion than did Hitler.

Our Minister of Defence, therefore, was wrong in basing his thinking defensively, and equally wrong in thinking in terms of England in Europe, instead of the Empire in the world. Nothing is more obvious than that to the British Empire the Mediterranean was most important and it was more than obvious that without the possession of the greater part of the African Coast the Mediterranean was perilous or impossible for us and the long voyage round the Cape our only means of transport between ourselves and the Eastern Empire.

Yet in the *Atlantic Monthly* of October, 1942, referring to a time when our fortunes in Egypt were dark there appeared a remarkable statement. It reads: 'Britain had sent her own tanks to Russia—better tanks than ours. She had to accept General Grant tanks under the Lease-Lend programme. Sometimes the British discreetly urged the superiority of a tank with a gun which could turn the full 360 degrees of a circle. We did not listen to them in spite of their combat experience. So the British pocketed their pride and took what they could get. Do not let us forget that when most of us cherished the illusion that we were equipping the world, the British were not only out-producing us, but also contributing greatly to United States production.'

Now it will be remembered that on one occasion when he broadcast to the world, Mr Winston Churchill said that, by the generosity of Mr Roosevelt, Sherman tanks had been deflected to our African Forces and had greatly helped in turning the tide of battle. The generosity is less startling, however, if the General Grant tanks had first contributed to turning the tide against us, but the operative sentence of the *Atlantic Monthly's* statement is: 'Britain had sent her own tanks to Russia.' In other words, it was considered by our War Cabinet, or by the Chiefs of Staff Committee, which in either case boils down to the Minister of Defence and Prime Minister, Mr Winston Churchill, that it was more important to maintain a land-front in Europe to draw off German troops eastward than it was to obtain possession of the African Coast and so safeguard our Imperial communications and avoid some

of the 220,000 casualties which the British Empire finally suffered in her land forces in the African campaign. In the House of Commons on July 2nd, 1942, Mr. Churchill stated "We have sent over 2 000 tanks to Russia."

This priority given to supplies to Russia has had no advertisement—either by ourselves or by the Russians. It started within a fortnight of the German attack upon Russia. Within three weeks of that attack we delivered to Russia 3 million pairs of army boots all made in the bombed cities of our own country and, according to Alexander Werth's record, in 'Moscow '41,' those boots saved the day.

Mr. Alexander Werth is not only half-Russian, but pro-Soviet, and his record of this conversation with a highly placed Soviet official who admitted that but for our army boots the Russian Army would have gone barefoot is of extreme significance. In the literal sense of the phrase we kept the Russian Army on its feet and it is to be remembered that when we, standing alone, bought goods from the United States we went and fetched them but when we gave supplies to Russia we went and put them down on her doorstep and the cost directly and indirectly of keeping open that Arctic sea-route has been tremendous. If the war-ships, aeroplanes and merchant-men had been free for other theatres of war, they alone would have made a tremendous difference to those other theatres. As for the supplies they carried, even apart from direct war material such as 'planes and tanks, the amount has been tremendous. Very quickly indeed the Government-owned United Kingdom Commercial Corporation, commonly known as U.K.C.C., began to handle supplies for Russia, and it has drawn on the entire British Empire for the goods. It has sent aluminium, cobalt tin, lead, ferro-chrome ferro-silicon, mica, zinc, thirty consignments of industrial diamonds electrical equipment, machine-tools and industrial plants. More than 82 000 tons of rubber chiefly from Ceylon, and 26 000 tons of tin, some of it from Cornwall were sent to Russia in the first two years of her warfare. Cotton-yarn, canvas-cloth, sacks and ropes went to Russia from India. Wool went from Australia, New Zealand and Iraq. Hospital tents and canvas went from Palestine. Coffee went from East Africa, tea from Ceylon, and one newspaper estimated the amount of khaki supplied by the British Empire to Russia as enough to spread from the White Sea to the Black. The fact is, it is counted



Typical of the contradictory muddle of our information concerning Russia is the business of "scorched earth". Our newspapers shrieked at us that the Russians destroyed everything that lay in the path of the advancing Germans—everything from crops to the most modern and expensive of machinery.

Such photographs as our Ministry of Information received did not bear out this statement, but nothing was said and the Press loudly denounced the civilians in Malaya for not adopting a policy of "scorched earth". None denounced louder than the *Evening Standard*, yet in 1943 this newspaper made a great splash of several articles from an Australian journalist, who was said to have been in Russia longer and to know it better than any foreign writer, and who stated that of course the reports of scorched earth were all nonsense. Papa Stalin would never have permitted anything so silly.

Now, in March 1944, the *Daily Telegraph* says

"From Our Own Correspondent  
Moscow,

'All Russians are impatient for the time when the Red Army will at last fight Germany on equal terms—on foreign territory where the destructive capacities of artillery and aircraft can be used to the full without special regard to the property of civilians.'

'Hitherto it has been a matter of routine for newspapers abroad to report that the Russians were 'already shelling' such-and-such a town.

'With rare exceptions the Russians never bombed or shelled their own towns—they have always tried to minimise destruction in the process of capturing places from the Germans.

"This has put them at a certain disadvantage. It is one which will be obviated when hostilities spread beyond the borders of Hungary and Rumania."

It is well-known that Russia kept her military secrets and the secrets of her anti-aircraft defence to herself (while we have been sharing ours with an Allied All and Sundry!), and certainly Russia could have informed us of what to expect from Japan in the way of efficiency for paratroops and all the paraphernalia of modern war were fully tried out in fighting between Soviet and Japanese troops about the Soviet-Manchurian frontier, fighting which was at its height in 1939.

This struggle was, in fact, large-scale warfare, and there is no doubt at all from the records that Japan did mean to attack Russia first, until the European war showed her the possibility of gaining the larger loot by reversing her programme and attacking first the British Empire.

According to European diplomats who spent the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Pacific war in Tokyo, in the Spring of 1941 Germany and Russia were known to be negotiating an extended pact to divide Persia and Turkey between them and the Japanese Press in the hope of adding to British difficulties, was urging on Russo-German collaboration, but the two countries quarrelled over the division of the loot, and in the event it was Russia who was attacked by Germany.

Three months before that attack, in the March of 1941, Matsuoka, one of the most important of the Japanese went to Moscow and he and Stalin at the Kremlin both proclaimed themselves Asiatics and stated that the world could only be saved through Russo-Japanese friendship. Stalin saw Matsuoka off at the station and allowed himself to be photographed embracing the Japanese. Stalin had never either welcomed at or accompanied to the station any European or American statesman.

The American authors of "How War Came to America," state, writing of September 1940. The possibilities were forbidding. Suppose the Japanese having sought to warn the United States away were to strike south? They had a foothold in Indo-China, they had Hitler's blessing on their aspirations in the Dutch Indies. Heinrich Stahmer, Ribbentrop's man, who had gone to Tokyo early in September by way of Moscow, assured Konoye and Matsuoka that their rear was safeguarded as the Soviet Union would be neutral in a Pacific war.

With this knowledge in the hands of those informed, and the extreme unlikelihood of its having been reversed after Russia was forced into a long retreat on her European front, was it not imperative that our war leaders should reconsider their entire war strategy when the engagement of ourselves and Japan in warfare became imminent? So convinced was Mr Churchill of the Japanese threat that, in a broadcast in the August of 1941, he referred to Japan and was violently attacked in the Tokyo Press.

Yet what happened in the autumn of 1941?

Nothing short of the diverting to Russia of armaments intended for Malaya!

On the 10th January 1943 I wrote in the *Sunday Dispatch* There is a large measure of agreement that 500 good fighter planes based on Singapore would have frustrated the enemy as without question they would have saved H M S *Prince of Wales* and H M S *Repulse*. And there are those of us who think that a policy of enormous supplies to Russia while any point of the British Empire remained unguarded was to put it very kindly fat headed. As we were already drawing off Germany's sea and air strength too great a tax on our supplies seems a somewhat exaggerated policy.

That paragraph was not just a general remark or an inspired guess. It was based on my definite knowledge that supplies which should have gone to the Far East had been sent to Russia and that the Government was rebuked for this performance in no uncertain fashion from the highest quarter.

In the United States of America books on the Far East are pouring out. Frequently they are either not published here at all or they do not appear until twelve to eighteen months after the American edition. I have had access to many of these books and one by Mr Morin of the Associated Press who was in Singapore at the time records a fairly well authenticated report that 1 000 aeroplanes intended for Malaya were diverted to Russia because things were going badly there. In

Malayan Postscript Mr Ian Morrison says Our aerial strength was divided between the Home Front the Middle East Russia and Malaya. However appalled we may be by the poverty of the British aerial resources in Malaya at the start of the Pacific war it is important to remember that Malaya came fourth on the priority list. This author continues with sentences suggesting that the whole trouble was our complete unpreparedness for war which Mr Churchill inherited from the previous Government. This is an explanation which is not acceptable. By the time that it came to a question of Malaya it was not so much a question of paucity of supplies as of a wrongly conceived strategy and a gross under-estimation of Japan. Whatever those aeroplanes may have done to save Russia from further retreat or even from defeat there is no excuse for turning them from their original destination and the price we paid for that decision was rightly described by Mr Winston Churchill in his speech to the U S Congress on May 19th

1943 as 'The greatest military disaster, or, at any rate, the largest military disaster in British history'

And the same people who sent aircraft elsewhere continued to pour infantry into Singapore to within a few days of its capitulation, though, if modern war has taught a lesson at all it is that of the helplessness of the finest infantry when left without air-cover

Poignancy is given to this obvious fact by the picture one writer has given of the Japanese attack on Singapore island

"Lieut-General A. E. Percival, commanding the garrison, rushed up reinforcements of Australians, British and Indian troops and counter-attacked at daylight before the enemy could establish themselves. Under the conditions of former wars the enemy would now be in a difficult position. With the coming of daylight their reinforcements could not have forced the Johore Strait which was commanded by our artillery. By all the old rules the invaders should have been overwhelmed and pushed back into the sea but with the first light of dawn the Japanese air squadrons arrived in swarms. Hundreds of dive-bombers swooped down on the advancing British, Australian and Indian forces or on those already occupying the inshore advance positions dropping their bombs and then zooming up with their rear gunners spattering the ground with machine-gun bullets. High overhead formations of ordinary bombers made high level attacks and the strain on the defending troops soon became almost unbearable. Toll was taken of the Japanese 'planes by the anti-aircraft batteries and by the few British Hurricane fighters available, but the British Air Force was hopelessly outnumbered. During the second day of the assault only six Hurricanes were available for the defence. The situation was worse than in Crete, because the attackers were operating from nearby aerodromes. As soon as the Japanese bombers and dive-bombers had discharged their loads they could fly back to the various airfields in their possession in Malaya fill up their bomb-racks, re-fuel and return to the attack.

The statement is made that during the entire Malayan campaign the Royal Air Force had only two hundred aeroplanes, including American machines and 51 Hurricanes. How bitterly ironical this makes the fact, quoted by Captain Gimmans, M.P., that almost the last communication that came out of Singapore was a cheque for £20,000 subscribed by all

sent were, of course, set in motion within a few days and some within a few hours, of the Japanese declaration of war. To sum up, I submit to the House that the main strategic and political decision to aid Russia, to deliver an offensive in Libya and to accept a consequential state of weakness in the then peaceful theatre of the Far East, was sound and will be found to have played a useful part in the general course of the War, and that this is in no wise invalidated by the unexpected naval misfortunes and the heavy forfeits which we have paid, and shall have to pay in the Far East. For this Vote of Confidence on that I rest.<sup>1</sup>

The statement on Russia is probably the most staggering pronouncement of all time and the unexpected naval misfortunes of course was a remarkably mild way of referring to the sinking by the Japanese of HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse*.<sup>2</sup> And why were the naval misfortunes unexpected?

On 24th February, 1942, less than a month later, Mr Churchill said in the House of Commons

I will however say this. Singapore was of course, a naval base rather than a fortress. It depended upon the command of the sea, which again depends upon the command of the air.<sup>3</sup>

Then why not expect the loss of battleships which are sent out without air cover?

A few minutes later Mr Churchill said 'The (Japanese) enemy have for the time being a waning command of the sea. They have had the command of the air, which makes it costly and difficult for our air reinforcements to establish themselves and secure dominance.

How are these two sentences to be reconciled with that last quoted? And waning command or not the Japanese proceeded immediately to the conquest of the Dutch East Indies and a victorious drive over thousands of miles of ocean which ended in their occupation of New Guinea and their bombardment of the coasts of Australia.

Had Mr Churchill foreseen any of that, surely he would not have said yet another few minutes later on 24th February 1942

<sup>1</sup> Peaceful. <sup>1</sup> See pages 56, 57 and 58.

<sup>2</sup> The End of the Beginning p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> The End of the Beginning p. 72.

On the other hand if we look forward across the considerable period of immediate punishment through which we must make our way in consequence of the sudden onslaught of Japan—if we look forward through that and across that to the broad and major aspects of the War—we can see very clearly that our position has been enormously improved not only in the last two years but in the last few months. This improvement is due of course to the wonderful strength and power of Russia and to the accession of the United States with its measureless resources to the common cause. Our position is in fact improved beyond any measure which the most sanguine would have dared to predict.

What a famous Field Marshal of the British Empire thought of this improvement beyond any measure which the most sanguine would have dared to predict I shall reveal below and also what disaster in hard fact that enormous improvement entailed.

In April 1943 the Australian High Commissioner speaking in London expressed the same view.

Mr Bruce said that during 1941 Australia became increasingly concerned as to the attitude of Japan.

In reply to comforting assurances about Malaya and Singapore Australia pointed out the need for greater air strength at Singapore in view of the impossibility of providing adequate naval forces.

The Australian view did not prevail he said. I make no complaint of this. I recognise how hard pressed we were in the air in those almost desperate days.

In the light of subsequent events however would not our present judgment be that almost any sacrifice would have been worth while if it would have prevented Japan from occupying the territories she now holds with the enjoyment of the vital resources they contain of rubber oil tin and almost more important quinine and their denial to the United Nations?

Should we not remember the results which flowed from ignoring the advice of those on the spot prior to Japan's entry into the war in considering the views which are now being put forward by those responsible for the South west Pacific?

For my own part I go and have always gone further. Not almost any but any sacrifice would have been worth while to have prevented Japan from occupying the territories

she now holds Had Moscow been lost, that would have been a local triumph for Germany, but the loss of Singapore meant the entire alteration of the strategy of world-wide warfare

Our great Eastern Empire was the Cinderella of this war simply because our war-leaders had no idea of the true strength of Japan and even now in 1944 they do not know what we are up against

When war had started in the Pacific they still decided that to beat Germany was by far the most important thing, and few people in England had any realisation even after the fall of Singapore just what the Far Eastern war meant

On 11th April 1943 I wrote an article which was widely reproduced in Australia and after which my views of the conduct of the war were sent by cable to the Australian Press. In various ways London's "military correspondents" referred to that article during the succeeding months. During the week after the appearance of the article there was a meeting in London of all those interested in our future in the air, aircraft manufacturers aircraft designers, scientists, visionaries and millionaires with both a practical and a patriotic stake. At that meeting the chairman referred to my article and stated 'This is the only point of view that matters and this means aircraft'. After the meeting two people who were present—Viscount Bennett and Lady Margaret Stewart—raced to the telephone to be the first to tell me what had happened and a couple of months later the statement was made by the British and American Governments that the wars in Europe and the Pacific were to have equal attention

They have not had equal attention. The mentality still prevails which put Russia before Malaya and at the end of 1942 amassed Allied shipping to land an American and Allied Force in North Africa (which, as the event proved might as well have been left to the Eighth Army which did the real work), and thus prevented an adequate campaign in Burma for which shipping was needed. Even in March, 1944 a message has come from the Fourteenth Army in Burma that it hopes it is not the 'Forgotten Army'.

Because this mentality still prevails I reproduce here the article I wrote in April, 1943

We are repeating with Japan every mistake we have made in our war with Germany—with the vital difference that the mistakes we are making with Japan are on an infinitely bigger scale and that, compared with the Japanese enemy, the Germans are just *ersatz*.

There are 68 million Germans proper and they now control the greater part of Europe which covers only a comparatively small part of the surface of the globe. The Germans have as prisoners of war some 200,000 of the King's subjects and the only British territory they occupy is the Channel Islands. There are some 100 million Japanese and they now control something like a quarter of the land and water surface of the globe. The Japanese have some 30 million of the King's subjects under their present exploiting sway and they are in possession of hundreds of thousands of square miles of British territory.

The Germans have known defeat and inflation within this generation and, moreover, they are a people with a fundamental sense of inferiority.

The Japanese, however, fully believe in their "divine" mission of conquest, and can live on a handful of rice in discomfort amounting to agony, NOT because they are sub-human wretches who don't know any better, but because they realise the fundamental truth that man is free and potent in proportion as his bodily demands decrease. The Japanese have a moral preparation for war rarely equalled.

The "re-fuelling stations" of the Pacific war are islands, and the Japanese possess 2,400 of them, spreading from their mainland 2,000 miles southward towards the Dutch East Indies (now also in Japanese possession) and Australia, and 2,000 miles eastward towards Hawaii. Little wonder that Mr Byas, in his authoritative book, "The Japanese Enemy," writes: "Compared with European theatres of battle, the Pacific is as Wembley Stadium to a village pitch."

Japan has something new in interior positions, for the Japanese Islands themselves are effectively screened by all these small islands, great waters, and vast conquered territories, which she is now busy exploiting for war purposes. The Japanese homeland is securely tucked away behind an area big enough to hold the entire American continent from Port Churchill on Hudson Bay, to Quito on the Equator, with the West Indies thrown in. And the only possible bases for air attack on Japan are the Russian bases.



AND ON WHAT DATE ARE WE SUPPOSED TO GET THOSE?

The Chinese bases, even if we had them, are too far back and it must ever be remembered that effective large-scale fighting in China has been almost non-existent since 1938

And we have allowed Japan a nice, comfortable year in which to consolidate her possessions and turn Singapore Hongkong and Corregidor into real fortresses

And bombing has not yet defeated any country

And the Japanese, accustomed to tidal waves and earthquakes which destroy tens of thousands of lives and many square miles of property, are far less likely to be defeated by it than anyone-else

Given that there is to be "a partial measure of demobilisation" here, as the Prime Minister said in his broadcast, when Hitler is defeated—would someone please tell us *who* is going to fight Japan?

The British Empire ought to know by now that, though it is a fine thing to have allies, it is infinitely better to be able to do the job ourselves. We relied on the French army and it collapsed and left us in a pretty pickle. We relied on the American Pacific fleet and it disappeared in four hours and flung the way open to the greatest disaster the British Empire has ever known. So if we are going to be partially demobilised, who is going to fight? And be certain to go on fighting?

Germany began by treacherous attack and tore through Poland in a fashion that startled everyone, but within a week or two our Government had settled down complacently to wait until Germany cracked from within

Seven months later both soldiers and politicians complacently assured us that Hitler had "missed the bus"

The women of the country, who had been told by the Minister of Defence in 1938 that their voluntary association in Territorial units was "neither necessary nor desirable," were told in 1940 by Mr. Bevin, addressing himself to a woman M.P., that they could not be taken into industry because no machinery existed to absorb them

Germany thus gained the whole winter and, instead of obliging by cracking, stampeded over Norway, Belgium, Holland and France. We had to get a new government before we began to fight the war in Europe

Japan began by a treacherous attack and tore through the Far East in a fashion that startled everyone but within a week or two our Government and that of the United States had settled down to wait until Japan exhausted her aeroplanes and ships in Mr Roosevelt's words with almost mathematical certainty

And as the women were told that they were not wanted to fight Germany so now the men have been told that lots of them will not be needed to fight Japan

If Japan instead of being exhausted with almost mathematical certainty stampedes in a fresh career of conquest—need I go on?

It cannot be argued that the course of inaction we have pursued has been thrust upon us by resources or circumstances for we have not done those things we could quite amply do

And it we finish off the European war first SHALL WE NOT BE RELEASING THE GERMAN PEOPLE FROM THE STRAIN OF WARFARE WHEN WE OURSELVES MUST CONTINUE TO ENDURE IT?

Why are we not dominating the propaganda war in the Far East reassuring and stirring up our 30 000 000 fellow subjects now under the Japanese yoke by means of an immensely powerful wireless station in India?

Why must the Australian War Council in the person of Sir Earle Page declare A careful scrutiny of the reserves of frontline airplanes in the U S A Africa and Europe or idle in America should enable the forces we desire in the Pacific to be made available without detriment to the actual fighting strength in other theatres of war?

On April 8th the Prime Minister of Australia called the Pacific the front of lost opportunities and added Let us hope it does not become the front where we lost the war During their advance the Japanese have been highly vulnerable Golden opportunities of dealing them counterblows have been missed They have been allowed to consolidate their position and their defeat is now a longer and a harder task

Japanese policy is a policy of dynamic attack To suppose that she will now remain quiescent is ridiculous (and even did she do so every day makes it more difficult for us to dig her out!) If there were a Japanese invasion of Australia there would of course be a wild scramble to move most of the

equipment and a good many of the population of this island over there. But why sit complacently and wait for such a spur?

The real trouble is that there are too many people, and particularly our elderly politicians, who are so rooted in the tradition of Europe that they cannot see her for what she is—a decadent and a dying continent.

Indeed, they cannot see the patently obvious, that salvation in the most literal sense only exists for us in the increasing might and security of the British Empire, and that the threat to that Empire is in the Pacific.

Let us pray that they do not see it with too great a jerk.

\* \* \* \*

As this article criticised the basic strategy of the war, and therefore the heads of both the British and American Governments, I did not expect the editor to like it so I took it in myself and suggested that he read it while I was there.

He read it then looked at me.

I put on my most determined expression.

"I'll have to read this a second time," he said.

"Do," I replied equably.

He read it, and looked at me.

I half-rose whereupon he said: "There's one sentence that must come out."

"Well, one sentence could not alter that article."

"What is it?" I asked.

After quoting the Prime Minister's statement on a partial measure of demobilisation, I had written: "Who has been telling the Prime Minister bed-time stories?"

That pertinent query was omitted.

Even so, my article did not go nearly far enough.

Three months later I found myself talking to Field-Marshal Wavell at a dinner-party. It was a few days before the publication of his appointment to the Vice-royalty of India, and a few weeks before his elevation to the Peerage.

Concerning the Far East and my articles, he said just two sentences: "You have shown the people of this country just how important the Far East is to us from the Imperial and political point of view. But now show them that it is essential to us from the economic point of view and that unless we regain it and its resources we shall find ourselves unable to fight a prolonged war anywhere at all."

This demand shook me slightly, as I had nothing to go on save that a very worried officer from India had said to me earlier in the year that the Command there could get no information out of, and no co-operation from the Ministry of Economic Warfare, and that both were urgently needed.

I decided to investigate the affairs of the Ministry of Economic Warfare, in which between one and two thousand officials draw nice salaries at the public expense with no discoverable result save periodic pronouncements on enemy "shortages" that have been invariably disproved by events.

I also went to the Ministry of Information Far East Department and worked my way through untidy masses of papers. Then I said to one of the officials there: "What I really want to know is what amount of invested capital we lost in the Far East?"

"But no one has written a book about it yet," he replied.

As long as these Ministries exist, how CAN we regain Singapore?

I left the Ministry of Information and went into the City to do my delving.

A few days later, on 18th July, 1943, the following result was published:

"Mr. Jesse Jones, the United States Secretary of Commerce, recently announced the formation in America of a new corporation to acquire petroleum products and petroleum reserves outside the United States, his object being to 'look ahead in the unfortunate event of a prolonged war.'"

"Well, the idea is admirable—if twenty months late. May I, therefore, recommend it to the attention of our own Ministry of Economic Warfare?"

"Is it too much to suggest that, instead of their spokesman (apparently either first cousin or even Siamese twin to the late unlamented gentleman in Cairo) informing us in June that Germany's stocks of rubber 'must' now be seriously depleted, the Ministry would really and seriously turn its attention to a single-minded effort to shorten this war and ensure victory by securing adequate stocks of strategic materials? And of depriving the enemy of them; not merely interrupting the free exchange of goods between Germany and Japan, with which they seem at present content."

"It is unchallengeably true that the Ministry of Economic Warfare has not assisted those who have the right to its assistance in the war against Japan

'It is equally true that Japan has an enormous wealth of raw materials. It is the bitter fact that she took the bulk of them from us. And the position may well arise in time that we cannot prosecute the war *anywhere* without those strategic materials' we have lost

Above all each day in possession of them brings Japan to a position of incredible strength

And the interest of the Ministry of Economic Warfare in all this is as elusive as the sausage in the sausage roll described by the schoolboy. 'The first bite you miss it and the second bite you're past it'

One Japanese estimate of the amount of essential material Japan gained by her Pacific conquests ENTIRELY EXCLUDING CHINA, lists, among other things, 2 600 000 tons of iron a year, more than 900 000 tons of rubber, 1,376 000 tons of sugar, 11,200 tons of quinine, 2 300 000 tons of corn, 6 640 000 tons of rice, 164 000 tons of manila hemp and so on

"Considering her own vast production of silk (*while we are grubbing round for remnants for parachutes*) and all she has gained in China, Japan is indeed sitting pretty. And unless she is rapidly ejected from our territories she will be in a position to carry on warfare to the world's end

"True (as well as collecting odd bits of salvage) we are now growing *some* rubber in our African Colonies, and the United States is making it. But Lord Rothes, Director of Tyres, has just said in Glasgow that even when supplies of synthetic rubber arrive from the United States we shall want the largest possible stock of natural crude rubber left, as some vitally important things cannot be made satisfactorily from synthetic rubber

"And all the time Japan luxuriates in quantities she cannot use.

"This is what the *Wall Street Journal* of December 30, 1942, has to tell us. Japan has started using surplus rubber from Malaya and the Dutch Indies to make petrol and fuel oil. Japan now controls 90 per cent of the world's rubber-producing area. In 1940 the region now held by Japan shipped 1,200 000 tons of rubber, and in a peak year

690 000 000 yen and by 1937 that trade had increased to 6 958 000 000 yen. Whereas at the end of 1914 Japan had a net national debt of 1 090 000 000 yen at the end of 1920 she possessed a national credit of 2 770 000 000 yen.

Yet instead of recognising their great ability the Western world had chosen to shrug its shoulders and dismiss the Japanese as copyists.

Was there ever such imbecility?

For the entire world copied England in industrialised civilisation and world wide trade! All nations and peoples are copyists save us and the only difference between Japan and many other countries is that she copied more effectively than most!

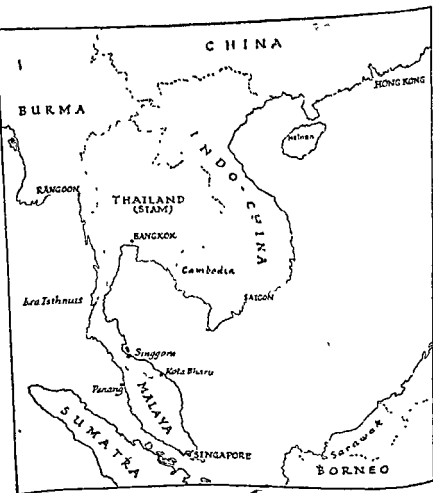
And now she is exploiting as cleverly as anyone could. According to Japanese writers (page 57 Oriental Affairs Shanghai July 1941) Japan is seeking to establish a net work of monopolies on the Asiatic continent. She had then already some 15 companies with a total capital of 2 147 200 000 yen of which the Japanese Government's share was 1 040 450 000 yen.

And since that day vast riches have fallen to her to exploit. The general estimate in London of British capital invested in the Far East is round about £1 000 000 000 and that does not include capital registered in Shanghai which alone must represent colossal wealth. All the vastness of material which these sums represent is now being used as Japan pleases—and what are we doing about it? Will the Ministry of Economic Warfare wake up?

Japanese tenacity once in was well illustrated in the Philippines. In 1900 there were 90 Japanese in all the islands. In 1938 there were 15 000 Jap farmers and merchants in Davao alone as well as vast numbers of fishermen along the coasts. They worked so hard and succeeded so well that in 1935 the Filipinos started an agitation and the Americans tried to pass a law returning all lands to the original native proprietors. But so strong were the Japanese that the attempt was dropped.

That is a measure of what the Japanese can pull off under an alien Government. Be assured they are doing far better for themselves now in their most industrious exploiting.

Japan has what is ours. Japan has what we NEED for the long prosecution of any war. Each day she is in



whence the land thins to a very narrow neck known as the Kra Isthmus. There two frontiers meet the frontier of Siam now called Thailand, and the frontier of Burma. For the next two to three hundred miles north of Malaya the land broadens slowly and is divided between Burma and Thailand. Burma continues to march with the frontier of Thailand until it meets the vast bulk of China, above which, in turn, sprawls the mass of Soviet Russia. To the east of Thailand runs the former French Colony of Indo-China until it, too, reaches China proper. The whole east and south coast of Indo-China is washed by the South China Sea.

In 1819 Sir Stamford Raffles bought for England that uninhabited island which we turned into the mighty city of Singapore. Years before, the island had been an outpost of one of the Empires of the Malayan peoples and the native name of the village there is Singapura. It remained for the British Empire to give meaning to the name which can be punningly transcribed as Lion City.

A few years before Raffles bought that island, amidst jealous grumblings at Home and at Calcutta from people who could not foresee, as he did its strategic possibilities the East India Company had bought Penang off the Malay Peninsula from the Sultan of Kedah. That was in 1786. The rest of Malaya came under our control largely at the request of its Sultans, and we gave the peninsula a peace previously unknown. Such was our administration that in this century we controlled a population of five and a quarter millions with a police force which had fewer than 200 British officers.

It is the exact truth that, if ever man could be said to have created a country, we created Malaya. Her richness of rubber-trees was not given her by the Almighty at the creation, but by the British in the 19th century. Sir Joseph Hooker, then Director of Kew Gardens, had seedling rubber-trees brought from Brazil to Kew and after experiments there, the transplantation of rubber on an enormous scale entirely altered the value of Malaya. It is symptomatic of a great and grave world-problem that an American reporter of the Associated Press one of its star men, has just written a book on the Far East in which he states that the Dutch transplanted rubber from Brazil to the Dutch Indies. When he arrives at Singapore he cites that city and Malaya as examples of the bad old days of an Empire-snatching Britain and has not a





of Malaya only some 30,000 survived into this century. The newer race, Mahomedans, had penetrated the country, coming both from the North and from Java and Sumatra and Celebes, and when our money and our genius made Malaya rich in the production of rubber and tin, Chinese and Indians swarmed into the country to profit by what we were creating. In 1942 there were actually as many Chinese as Malays in Malaya and as the debonair Malays had no love of the Chinese they looked, according to one observer, on the Japanese invasion at least to some extent as but a development of the Japanese attack on China which rather pleased them than otherwise.

The whole territory of Malaya is, from the Governmental point of view, divided into three parts. First there is the Straits Settlements, consisting of Singapore, Malacca and Penang. Singapore and Penang we obtained by purchase, Malacca we took from the Dutch in 1795 but returned it to them in 1818 and then in 1824 exchanged it for Bencoolen which we then held in the Netherlands Indies. Next in time come the four Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Pahang and Negri Sembilan. These Federated Malay States came under British protection in the 19th century through their internal dissension. The third category is the Unfederated Malay States: four States in the north and Johore in the south. Although our relations with Johore were close in the 19th century, we had no formal Treaty with the Sultan until 1914.

There were only a few thousand British in Singapore, and many more Malays, Chinese, Indians and Asiatics in general, with no essential unity. That they could have been made more conscious of the British Empire, and their unity within it, is undoubtedly true, but British Governments in this century have been full of the cowardice Tennyson foresaw when he wrote:

"Pray God our greatness may not fail  
Through craven fear of being great."

When warfare actually broke out in the neighbourhood of Singapore, the few thousand British should at all costs have remained among their Asiatic employees and neighbours. Apart from some few who were stampeded by rumours, and Japanese-used wireless, into leaving of their own accord, the bulk of the men were actually taken away from their normal

word to say about rubber. The truth is of course that the Dutch Indies and our own island of Ceylon quickly followed our example in transplanting rubber to Malaya. This same reporter has a good deal to say about how offensive the British in particular and Europeans in general are to newspaper men.

In view of the remarkable inaccuracy of their background and their complete lack of manners in rushing into another people's territory and cross examining everybody is this surprising? But certainly this man—Reiman Morin—seems very surprised though his book undoubtedly gives the impression of a man trying to be fair and unbiassed. He tells how by the middle of 1941 hordes of American Special Correspondents descended upon Singapore in search of hot stories. Previously Singapore had been free of them but by that date it had at least dawned on the American Press that war in the East was coming and that Singapore was the nerve centre. Mr Morin himself had already been snubbed by the Dutch Admiral Helfrich in the Netherlands East Indies. Mr Morin had seen him once and once only and was naively hurt because the Admiral would not unbosom himself upon the subject of Japan. In Singapore Mr Morin was very hurt to find American Press Correspondents were even called vultures and birds of ill omen to their faces. He admits that actually you could get just about anything you wanted in Singapore if you polished the right apples long enough. But certainly the American journalists in their annoyance at not being welcomed with open arms and told all about the Naval Base in words of one syllable are responsible for a good deal of the violent excitement and condemnation which the world outside the British Empire unloosed at the fall of Singapore. The inhabitants of the British Empire had every right to be indignant to the point of impeachment and execution. The rest of the world had no right in view of its own performances alone even to criticise much less to condemn.

There is this however to be borne in mind. This world has a vast and a clamorous hunger for strength and certainty. It has an even vaster hunger for the manifestations of both. The one thing that is neither forgotten nor forgiven is a moment of weakness in either a nation or an individual who is strong.

There has also been much chat concerning the native races of Malaya. These are the facts. Of the original inhabitants

of Malaya only some 30 000 survived into this century. The newer race Mahomedans, had penetrated the country, coming both from the North and from Java and Sumatra and Celebes, and when our money and our genius made Malaya rich in the production of rubber and tin, Chinese and Indians swarmed into the country to profit by what we were creating. In 1942 there were actually as many Chinese as Malays in Malaya and as the debonair Malays had no love of the Chinese they looked, according to one observer, on the Japanese invasion at least to some extent as but a development of the Japanese attack on China which rather pleased them than otherwise.

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employment to serve in a so-called Volunteer Force. They were comparatively untrained and could hardly affect the military situation, while their removal from their normal sphere could not fail to have a bad effect on the morale of the Asiatics. There were Chinese and Malay Volunteer Forces also, but their recruitment was limited, and their use in vital positions such as the Frontier was discouraged.

As for the orders to evacuate places in the mainland, the story is almost incredible. General Heath at the time he thought suitable gave an order for civilian evacuation. Sir Shenton Thomas, the Civil Governor, *without informing General Heath*, countermanded the order, after which Mr Duff Cooper, at a war council, on hearing the facts, remarked with extreme sarcasm: 'After all, General Heath is going to fight the battle.' Thereupon Sir Shenton Thomas obligingly countermanded his own countermand! It is little to the point to blame civilians for anything in chaos of that kind.

Sir Shenton Thomas was at an age when he could have been retired with the utmost graciousness (if that matters), and have made way for an authoritative war governor, a military appointment. Instead of that he was allowed (the story goes he was *asked*!) to remain, and General Percival was appointed to the military command. Now General Percival had previously been in Singapore in a position subordinate to that of Sir Shenton, and although in his new appointment he was no longer subordinate, eye-witnesses say he continued to "sir" Sir Shenton—a mental attitude indicative and explanatory of much.

A great deal has been said by various writers of the fact that lights were burning in Singapore during the first Japanese air-raid on the city. The facts are these. News of the Japanese attack on Kota Bharu in the north of Malaya was given to Sir Shenton Thomas at one a.m. At four a.m., when the raid on Singapore began, the Civil Defence had still not been warned that an attack on Malaya had been made. The material damage to Singapore was not great. The effect of the burning lights on every type of mind was considerable.

The evacuation of Penang is an unbelievable story. According to an account which was flown to England from Australia when the survivor was sufficiently recovered, no one expected Penang to be evacuated and the women, many with young children, were rushed out at three to four hours'

notice with what possessions they could cram into a bag. Three days later they arrived in Singapore without having had the opportunity for a proper meal or a bath—and this in a country where Europeans find three baths a day necessary. In Singapore full arrangements had been made, on the initiative of the Government for temporary homes for the Penang evacuees. The account continues. When at last the trains arrived at Singapore they were immediately bundled into a cargo boat. These cargo boats were small cramped and extremely squalid and for twelve days these women lived a life of unimaginable horror batten down in the hold. Imagine the feelings of these women when they found out that many of the passengers already, on the ship were occupying cabins which were half-empty. One English lady with two children, the wife of a Volunteer assured me that there was no proper sanitary or washing arrangements and that they were not allowed to visit the other parts of the ship during the trip. There were many caustic comments passed in Singapore about the hurried evacuation of Penang especially as the island was fortified to some extent and there had always been a permanent garrison there.

The propaganda story as it relates to the fall of Singapore is probably the silliest of all time. There was in Malaya a privately-owned broadcasting station but a Malaya Broadcasting Company was set up by the Government and a young man was sent out from the B B C to occupy the position of Director of Talks. That young man arrived in Singapore the day the Pacific war started. Apart from the Ministry of Information censorship he was necessarily in complete control of what was said over the Malayan air. He knew no Malay, Chinese or Hindustani but he had a great love of the drama and refused to concentrate on topical talks because he said it was necessary first to build up a listening public, and in order to do that while war was raging in the Malayan Peninsula, he put on plays by Shaw and Noel Coward. So that he might give the impression that he had a large staff, he built up four separate characters which were all himself. One of these he had the unmitigated impertinence to name John English. In a book now published in America he says I tried to make John English a creditable person, getting him to halt stutrer, 'um,' 'er' and be affectedly casual in the best B B C manner. Perhaps this was a mistake.

By God it was

The wireless certainly did its worst for Singapore. It relayed news from the B B C. which was inaccurate and even the staff of the Malaya Broadcasting Corporation now write that the B B C broadcasts did great harm. It quoted Mr Churchill's speeches, saying that we must look for further losses, which everyone there took to mean the loss of Singapore. The Australian Prime Minister did little better and the wireless blazoned their words about the earth. The difficulties and dissensions created by the Tower of Babel among mankind are as nothing compared with the problems set by the unfortunate discovery of wireless. For instance, to keep the Asiatics from panic and even more if they were to be inspired by any sense of common cause, it was essential to talk of the might of England and the greatness of our armies. The staff put over on the air, including that of Mr Duff Cooper on the spot, was all about how magnificently the British react at times of adversity. In other words it was yet another manifestation of the limits of minds centred in Europe heedlessly pouring out stuff which might just as well have been nicely calculated to make the Asiatics shake in their shoes.

The ignorance of those at the top (who would talk at Home and interfere from Home) extended from the people to the territory. Everybody must remember, if they remember nothing else, how English politicians and English newspapers talked of the "impenetrable jungle" which protected Malaya in the north.

Now at the beginning of 1942 a book was published named "The British Colonial Empire". It was written by Mr. W. E. Slimmett who, in May, 1940, was sent out by the British Government to the United States to explain to the people there about our Colonial Empire. It would have been far better had they kept him at home to explain about the Colonial Empire to the War Cabinet. On page 125 he says: "Malaya has a splendid system of communications in the Federated Malay States Railways which comprise over 1,000 miles of line connecting Singapore and Bangkok in Thailand and all the intervening States and centres. There are also several thousand miles of excellent roads."

In other words, the railway from Singapore to Bangkok runs right through "the impenetrable jungle" and our military authorities at least were aware that there were railways in

Malaya for they had in Malaya an armoured train which, had it been immediately used on the Thai frontier, could at least have prevented the Japanese from enjoying the advantage of that railway and sending, as they did send, masses of men and materials puffing happily over it. But that armoured train was never used—thanks to the Foreign Office

Just as imagination had turned the Naval Base into an impregnable fortress, so more imagination constructed impenetrable defences out of the nature of the country. Then when the crash came the main outcry was against the guns which, embedded in concrete, faced only one way but the main cause of the fall of Singapore was the minds in the Foreign Office which were as rigidly embedded, and could think only in one direction

In the jungle along the Thai-Malayan frontier the East Surreys comprising with the two Indian Brigades the 11th Indian Division lived and waited for months. Apart from military exercises and games, there was nothing for them to do save live in humid heat and green gloom in a land of elephants, walking-fish and flying-lizards. Early in 1944 Viscount Wavell stated that when he visited Malaya—of which he had not then command—at the end of 1941 he found the morale of the Indian troops somewhat anæmic and he knew that they had been destined for Libya. They had been half-trained for desert fighting and then switched to Malaya where they would have to fight in jungle, for which they were not trained and could not be trained, any more than could their white comrades-in-arms. The simple truth was that there was no one to train them, as the Japs were trained. Quite typical was the effort of one Colonel (local head of the Far East Central Bureau of Information!) who lectured to troops on Thailand and called the Thais 'Thighs' throughout, not in a mistaken attempt at humour but because that really was the measure of his information concerning the country. At one time there was only one British officer in Malaya in 1941 who spoke Siamese

None the less, this is not the explanation of our failure to stop the Japanese or, at any rate, to hold them for a much longer period, in the North of Malaya. It is true that our troops could not easily distinguish—or distinguish at all—between Chinese, Japanese and Malays and so could not be certain whether an enemy or a friend was advancing towards



them, but no lack of local knowledge could extend to a lack of knowledge of that railway, or to the existence of the Kra Isthmus. As I pointed out at the beginning of the section, the frontiers of Burma and Thailand march together from the Kra Isthmus and a mere Commando raid from Burma could have cut across Siamese territory above Malaya, where it is only twenty miles wide. That held, the Japanese could only have reinforced their troops by sea and by ever-fresh landings. Yet that was never attempted. There is a story implicitly believed by British officers—and troops—that later a British Brigadier did advance from Burma into Thailand, only to be recalled and rebuked. So circumstantial is this story that I have been given his name and various other details, but as these came only at secondhand I leave the story at that, and with the comment that if it is not true in fact it is most certainly true in spirit.

The author of "Retreat in the East" was absolutely right when he wrote "The Japanese land attack against Burma began with the small British Army at another disadvantage. They had their outpost out against the Siamese frontier but beyond that frontier they could not go. Although the Japanese had assumed control of Siam, and were conducting their campaign against Malaya from Siam, and although they had occupied part of the Kra Isthmus by advancing out of Siam and were using Siamese air-fields from which to bomb Rangoon and other parts of Burma, the British were not officially at war with Siam. Kid-glove diplomacy resulted in British troops having to wait in Burma for the attack which it was known was being prepared from Siam. They could have added many days to the master-delaying plan of the Allied nations had they been allowed to establish themselves beforehand in Siam. However, on 21st January, 1942 the attack began. It was initiated by Siamese puppet soldiers of Japan. One month after Japanese bombers operating from Bangkok aerodrome had killed more than a thousand people in Rangoon, Britain was officially at war with Siam. One hundred Siamese troops crossed the frontier at Palu, due east of Moulmein. They attacked a Gurkha outpost there and then began digging in: they had done their bit for Siam."

In "Malayan Postscript," by Mr. Ian Morrison it is written. "The telegrams and dispatches exchanged between the Foreign Office and the British Legation at Bangkok during the weeks

preceding and the hours following the actual outbreak of hostilities ought to make especially interesting reading. British troops hung poised on the Thai border and waited for four whole days until they were attacked by the Japanese. On the evening of 8th December Japanese forces marched into Bangkok after what appeared to have been a few hours of purely token resistance in the morning on the part of the Thai army. The Japanese broadcast an allegation that the British had already advanced into Thailand and that their attack on Thailand was consequent on the British move. The Foreign Office hotly denied the charge, declared it was wholly untrue and that in no place had any British forces crossed the frontier when Japan invaded Thailand.

Mr Morrison goes on rightly to ask: Why did we never move? It was not because we had not enough troops. Was it a lack of offensive spirit? Or, continues Mr Morrison, was it that Sir Josiah Crosby was holding out to the British Government the hope of the Thais resisting the Japanese or at least remaining neutral if absolutely no provocation was offered them? This is the most plausible explanation.

As I do not know Mr Morrison I do not know whether his question concerning Sir Josiah Crosby was inspired in the old and correct sense of the word or in the modern newspaper and propaganda sense.

In either case it hit the nail on the head.

## II

When France fell in the July of 1940 two things must have been apparent to the meanest political intelligence. The first was that the fate of the French Colonies throughout the world was of urgent importance to us and the second that the army which waited on a frontier to be attacked as the French Army and our own Expeditionary Force in France had done was an army certain to be caught at grave disadvantage and only too likely to meet defeat. Yet the British War Cabinet managed to unite their ignoring of the two facts in a single protracted incident!

When France fell the fate of her Far Eastern Colony of Indo-China was indicative beyond the possibility of question

fight either with us or the Japanese, which was her obvious choice?

Again a small child could produce the correct reply. Yet, later in 1941, a Thai Military Mission was allowed to enter Malaya and to inspect all our frontier defences. They were shown everything, and this in spite of the situation and in spite of the fact that our Treaty with Thailand of 1909 contained a clause of elementary intelligence, precluding the Thais from keeping troops on their side of the frontier.

An American journalist has provided a story of Japanese penetration and growing influence in Thailand from the early 1930's. This account is quite independent of other accounts of the influence and general effectiveness of the Japanese Colonel Saito.

Writing in the Philippine Islands on 9th December, 1941, where he was stranded on his way back to America from the Far East, Clark Lee, correspondent of the Associated Press in America says in the ironically named, 'They Call it Pacific'. "Despatches from our correspondent in Bangkok, where the Japanese allowed radio transmission for several days, indicated that the Japanese had bought their way into that country.

"Brines said 'It looks like the work of our old friend Jiro Saito.' I added, 'Our bull-necked buddy has done it again.' Lieutenant-Colonel Saito intermittently for years had been Japan's advance-agent of conquest in the South. Educated in Honolulu, speaking flawless English, Saito had spent three years in Bangkok in the early 1930's as Military Attache. He had been rushed to Indo-China in the early August of 1941 to pave the way for complete Japanese occupation of that French Colony and then had gone on down to Bangkok to reap the crop he had sown years earlier. Saito had been a pupil of the then Colonel Kenjichi Doihara, 'Lawrence of Manchuria,' back at the time of the Mukden incident in 1931, when Japan started on the path of conquest and gave Hitler and Mussolini a few lessons in how to bluff the other powers. Saito had told me the whole story of the Mukden incident—a full confession of Japan's premeditated guilt—in Shanghai some months earlier. He knew the story well, because it had been he who transmitted the orders for the Japanese troops to march that snowy 18th September, 1931, which is actually the date when World-War No 2 started."

for the British Minister in Bangkok to look very lively indeed when Japan succeeded France as the Power in Indo-China.

In 1931 the headlines of the Bangkok newspapers were impossibly occupied with the news of the mutiny in the Royal Navy at Invergordon which started Japan off on her career of aggression.<sup>1</sup> The other European news-story which vied with it both in the attention it gained and the effect it produced was the fall of the Spanish Monarchy in the same year, a fall which some hold heralded the fall of the King of Thailand by its effect on the existing bodies of turbulent individuals.

There existed in Thailand a prophecy widely believed that after 150 years the dynasty would fall and it happened that the 150 years were up in 1932. In actual fact the crisis occurred on 23rd June 1932 when the King's power was restricted as the result of a *coup d'état* although the King did not abdicate until 1935. Always honestly friendly towards the English he then came to live at Virginia Water in Surrey.

In the 1930's Asia was seething with unrest and any revolutionary force in Thailand had always a ready-made strong weapon to its hand. That weapon was the threat to destroy foreign property and so bring upon the country an inquiry by the offended Power, an inquiry which might be followed by the occupation of the country. Add to this the fact that, although the Royal prestige was very great the actual occupant of the throne was amiable but weak and it is at once clear that the exponents of upheaval had a promising field. Moreover China before 1937 (when she was attacked by Japan) used to refer to Siam as the Nineteenth Province of China.<sup>2</sup> As the Thais feared Chinese influence they looked on China as a threat and the populace was accustomed to anti-Chinese manoeuvres and on the crucial night of the 1932 *coup d'état* mistook the beginnings of violent revolt for the ordinary anti-Chinese demonstration.

In the 1930's there was in Thailand as there is now, a certain Chinese-Siamese, Luang Pradit<sup>1</sup> educated in Paris and Communist in sympathy. For some time he ran a secret Press in Thailand, whose purpose appears to have been to provoke a revolution on the lines of 'Abdul Hamid in Turkey.

Less extremely revolutionary, but heading the Young Siamese Party, were those individuals who, later in the 1930's, became the government. Intrigue flourished on every side, the King deciding to use his cousin, Prince Bivaradet, to stage a revolution that should be no revolution—an army revolt that would be an anticipatory bluff. But the King lost this game of intrigue, and from 1935 despite more than one suggestion of counter-revolution, the titular King of Thailand has been a boy residing in Switzerland and one of the factual rulers of Thailand was the present Prime Minister who with the army behind him since 1938 has been dictator.

Thus Thailand, with her trim little Navy and an Army trained in the early days by Danes, was a promising field for Japanese intriguers. And where were we?

On 28th February, 1942, a British War Correspondent spent some time with the Governor of Burma, Sir Reginald Dorman Smith. This journalist, James Hodson, on page 332 of his book, "War in the Sun" recorded this interview.

Beneath it, in a paragraph by itself, is the one sentence 'We had no Intelligence Service in Thailand because I gather, our Foreign Office said 'the Thailand Government wouldn't like it'.

The Foreign Office could only get an idea like that from our Minister in Bangkok, and I happen to know that Englishmen who took an interest in Siamese politics during the 1930's were decidedly frowned upon by Sir Josiah Crosby.

Yet the thing is childish on the face of it! Since when has one Government said to another "Do you mind if I send my Intelligence people into your country to gather information?"

The only useful Intelligence Service—in fact the only possible Intelligence Service—is that composed of men or women who know the country very well, speak its language and have many long-standing contacts with its inhabitants. The Englishmen who knew Thailand were not merely not called upon by the Foreign Office, or by those in local command in

<sup>1</sup> Named Regent by Ban'k-k and Tokyo Radio August 1944

the Far East, they were in the most high-handed fashion prevented from acting by the Foreign Office

Therefore the situation boils down to this For our information on the all-important question of what were Thailand's true relations to Japan before the outbreak of war, we were officially dependent on our Minister at Bangkok or on what we could make of the situation through sources in Tokyo ambassadorial and journalistic

The American Government too had its view and its information on the Far East, some of which it communicated to us and some of which it did not, but nothing is more striking than the contrast between books on Singapore by American authors and books on Singapore by British authors The Americans are a land people, comparatively few of them know the sea or even see it, and that no doubt largely accounts for the fact that all American authors stress the situation in Thailand and the danger to Malaya's land frontier while, even after the fall of Singapore it was dismissed in a few lines by British authors To us Singapore and the sea were almost synonymous We thought of Singapore in the terms of naval power and we could not imagine its collapse That that was the state of mind among our diplomatic people in the East I have from the mouth of one of them Indeed even in 1944 he could say But we all thought that Singapore was an impregnable fortress! Whereas of course, Singapore was never a fortress at all and if such confusion of the real situation still lingered in 1944 what must have been its effect in 1941!

I remember discussing with a Canadian on the day of the sinking of *H M S Hood* the tremendous hold the sea has on the British mind As soon as it was known that *Hood* was sunk there was a gasp of outraged indignation and of determination throughout the country The chase of the 'Bismarck' was watched grimly and breathlessly, strangers gathered together at street corners and when it was known that the German ship was sunk there was a sigh of satisfaction that justice had been done No incident in the Battle of Britain and nothing in the career of our armies could have such effect

There is bitterly ironic humour in the fact that both England and America were looking the wrong way in the Far East in 1941 America was looking at the land-mass of Asia and expecting thereon an attack on the British Empire rather than on her island possessions England was anticipating a predomi-

nantly naval war and was going to rely to some extent on the American fleet!

Yet some of England's soldiers had warned her years before (though their warnings did not win them promotion!) In October 1929 an article on amphibious warfare was published in the *Cavalry Journal*. It was by Major C B Thorne M C (then Captain 3rd Dragoon Guards) and it quoted Colonel Repington once Military Correspondent of the *Morning Post* (Note that the espousers of the unpopular view stop at Major or Colonel and do not become Major-General or Field Marshal)

The article said: 'Security of Naval Bases—as mentioned previously—a Navy alone cannot remain powerful on the seas without the security of its bases. In this respect the late Colonel Repington held interesting views regarding Sydney as opposed to Singapore as a British Naval Base in the Southern Hemisphere. He argued that Sydney was defensible with its surrounding white population and resources and that even its occupation by an enemy could only be temporary. On the other hand he was of the opinion that an enterprising enemy might capture and destroy Singapore before assistance would be forthcoming and to defend it would entail an enormous expenditure and a considerable garrison. There was a certain amount of controversy at the time the question of this Base was being discussed and no doubt the Imperial Government went fully into the matter affecting it before making the final decision.

But if the Imperial Government had ever thought of 'the matter affecting the military security of Singapore—that is if they had ever thought of Siam—they had forgotten it very completely by 1941.

Yet a Japanese Lieutenant-Commander was so obliging as to

South China Sea, France holds the scales, her aid might well decide the issue and the diplomatic competition to gain it would be very keen

"One more point—the attitude of Siam This country lies across the northern end of the Malay Peninsula, as a glance at the map will show, and with its backing our operations against Singapore would obviously be facilitated Its alliance with us would bring the people of India out in open revolt and leave Singapore in a precarious position

"Fortunately we gained the goodwill of Siam over the last '42 to 1 vote' in the League of Nations But the Japanese people, though conscious that they have her goodwill do not realise how valuable it might be to them in connection with operations against Singapore in the South China Seas in the coming war with England We must bear in mind that our relations with her have their strategical as well as their commercial side "

It was only when the writing of my book was almost completed that I looked up the text of Ishimaru's statement The fact that we used the identical phrase concerning Siam—'one glance at the map'—(on page 1 of my book and page 218 of his) is therefore a striking coincidence

Yet in spite of all that has happened, Siam even as late as this moment in June, 1944 when this book is going to the printers still means nothing to our War Leaders

On 28th May, 1944 an article by Lord Donegall appeared in the *Sunday Dispatch* in which he stated that a "knowledgeable friend" of his had just returned from Asia

As Charles Eade, the Editor of the *Sunday Dispatch* had just returned from a Publicity appointment with Lord Louis Mountbatten's Command, the identity of the "knowledgeable friend" is hardly wrapped in mystery, and this is what the article said beneath a heading

#### "SIAM NEBULOUS

"The boundaries of the South-East Asia Command are still nebulous in places The Command, although its headquarters were at Delhi until last April, does not include India It takes in all the water surrounding India and includes the island of Ceylon From Ceylon the line goes south-east and passes between Sumatra and Java, northwards between Singapore



and Borneo until it reaches Siam. Before writing this I tried eight Government Departments to find out whether Siam is Mountbatten's pigeon or MacArthur's. None of them could tell me.

Perhaps when they have read this book it will dawn even upon our War Cabinet and Government Departments that there is a place called Siam.

(A book named "The War Moves East," published in 1942, makes the statement that in 3rd January of that year ' Marshal Chiang Kai-shek accepted the command of all land and air forces of the United Nations which were, or in future might be operating in the Chinese theatre including, at first such parts of Indo-China and Siam as might become available to the Allied troops.' If this is the arrangement and the British Government does not even realise it, in view of the facts later given about China it is doubly time they woke up)

### III

Against the background thus briefly indicated this was the order of events

In June, 1940, just before the French collapse, England and France made non-aggression pacts with Thailand in an obvious though hardly vigorous attempt to maintain the *status quo* in the Far East. The pact with France was never ratified and on 23rd September, Japanese troops were allowed by Vichy to establish themselves in Northern Indo-China. Three days later Japan concluded her alliance with Germany and Italy which had long been in the air. The coinciding of these events should have been more than enough to point out to our diplomats the uselessness of any non-aggression pact with Thailand. From that moment we should have had a military pact with her, or have known why not and been prepared to act on our knowledge.

The Japanese agreement with Germany and Italy was also of course a clear intimation of war with the United States of America. For Germany and Italy recognised Japan's leadership in the Far East and the signatories specifically pledged themselves ' to assist one another with all political, economic and military means when one of the three contracting parties

is attacked by a Power at present not involved in the European war or the Sino-Japanese conflict "

Russia, who had not then been attacked by Germany, was exempted by name from the operation of the pact so that the three countries who signed it could only mean the United States of America

America certainly recognised, in the phrase of one of her politicians, that by September, 1940, "Siam was in the Japanese orbit" but, as we have already stated America could not supply arms to those French in Indo-China who wished to resist the Japanese, nor would she agree with ourselves and the Dutch that there should be a definite territorial limit fixed in either Indo-China or Siam beyond which Japan could not go without danger of war It is interesting here to note that American sources state "Repeatedly during the Summer and Fall of 1940 Lord Lothian and Minister Casey suggested joint use of Singapore's facilities, as repeatedly Mr Hull changed the subject "

Later in 1940 came the Franco-Thai scrap the Siamese intending to regain their lost territory in South Indo-China. Seizing their chance, the Japanese offered to mediate and we urged both sides not to accept that mediation Our advice was refused and the Japanese mediation accepted That in itself was so tremendous a pointer that any acceptance of stories of the Siamese dictator's friendship towards us was thenceforth absolutely ridiculous, no matter from what source they came

Japan in the role of mediator between a White Power and an Asiatic Power shook Americans more than a little and on the 17th February, 1941, the Counsellor of the American Embassy in Tokyo made a speech for the confidential information of the British and American community there, in which he said that if Japan interfered with the British Empire or American communications in the Far East, America would fight

On the next day, 18th February, 1941, the Japanese Government spokesman in Tokyo gave all the journalists assembled at a Press Conference a considerable shock, for he calmly announced that Japan was prepared to act as mediator anywhere in the world and, indeed, a formal note to the same effect was sent by Matsuoka to Mr Anthony Eden, who had voiced some suspicions apparently, as to Japan's motives in

mediating between the Siamese and the French. On the 21st February one of the Japanese papers, *Asahi*, accused Siam of arming herself with the aid of Britain and the United States to hamper 'Japan's peaceful economic advance and doing so with undisguised malice'. On the 7th February, Matsuoka opened the French-Thai peace conference and had then stated that *the mere existence of the conference implied the acceptance of the leadership of Japan by both France and Thailand* and on 11th March Japan won all points by thrusting on both the French and the Siamese agreements which satisfied neither, while Japan got pledges from both that they would *maintain friendly relations with Japan, make special efforts towards intensified economic relations and that they "would enter into no agreement or understanding with any Third Power anticipating political, economic or military co-operation against Japan"*.

From that moment Thailand was our enemy unless her government could be changed.

At the same time conversations were being conducted in Washington between the Japanese and the Americans, conversations so secret that no one had been able to obtain confirmation of their existence until Mr Churchill let the cat out of the bag when he returned to London after the Atlantic Conference. The American statement is that until Pearl Harbour they were not at liberty to disclose their substance without the consent of the Japanese. At the same time, the Japanese chose to send five important units of their fleet to the Gulf of Siam, and the Australian and New Zealand War Cabinets called this a matter of "the utmost gravity".

On 29th January, 1942, speaking in the House of Commons, Mr Churchill said "Before the defeat of Pearl Harbour—I am speaking of eight or nine months ago—our ability to defend the Malay Peninsula was seriously prejudiced by the incursion of the Japanese into French Indo-China and the steady building-up of very powerful forces and bases there. Even at the time when I went to meet the President in Newfoundland the invasion of Siam seemed imminent."

Thus it is clear beyond contradiction that our Government was aware of the threat through Siam while we still had eight months in hand—eight months in which to act.

And if what had happened needed any underlining it got it on the 29th March when Toshio Shiratori, the official adviser

to the Foreign Office in Tokyo and formerly Ambassador to Italy stated that Japan's true aim was to drive the white man out of Asia. He continued: 'The world situation has changed and with it the vista of Japan's programme has widened. The Manchuria incident has become the China affair, and the China affair has become destined to become the historic war for the independence of Asia. The war has now moved from China to South Eastern Asia, and is about to enter the stage of the war for all Asia.'

In June, the Thais, while still talking loudly of neutrality, let it be known that Japan was demanding military facilities in Thailand, and the British authorities in Singapore announced that any Japanese moves towards Siam would be met with 'defensive counter-moves'.

To talk to Orientals of defensive counter-moves was tantamount to throwing up the sponge, and the immediate results, if not tragic, would have been highly comic for, on 12th July, Japan had an extraordinary meeting of her Cabinet, which passed such wide measures of economic control and general censorship that it could only mean war. At the same time the Press, led by the semi-official Japanese Newsagency, charged England, America, Chungking and the Netherlands East Indies with forming an alliance against Japan, and the British were specifically accused of encircling Thailand.

This was answered a fortnight later by the freezing of Japanese funds in the Allied countries, and nothing sillier can be imagined than the use of economic pin-pricks against a nation while still climbing down to her in the diplomatic field. For about the same time Mr Grant, the U.S. Minister in Bangkok, who was certain that the Japanese had a firm hold over Luang Phibul, the Thailand Premier, was recalled and the British Foreign Office was still accepting Sir Josiah Crosby's assurances that we stood well with the Siamese, while an English Intelligence Officer, Captain Becker, in Malaya was working frantically to change the situation in the only possible way—by a *coup d'état* in Siam so arranged as to bring British forces into that country.

On the 5th August, Japanese troops were known not only to have occupied key-points in Southern Indo-China, but to have marched across Cambodia, right up to the new frontier of Thailand while, at the same time the Japanese Press said that Thailand had been placed under the merciless pressure of

England, the United States and Chungking, so that her existence as a nation was at stake. This may have been a retort to the statement made by a member of the American Government to the American Press, on 24th July, the day the freezing-order was issued. He said "There is not the slightest ground for belief on the part of the most credulous that the Governments of the United States, of Great Britain or of the Netherlands, have any territorial ambitions in Indo-China, or have been planning any move which could have been regarded as threats to Japan. Our Government can only conclude, therefore, that the action of Japan is undertaken because of the estimated value to Japan of bases in that region, primarily for purposes of further and more obvious movements of conquest in adjacent areas."

"Movements of conquest in adjacent areas"! And still our troops were kept rotting idly on the Malayan frontier!

Mr Churchill's broadcast at the end of August in which he referred to the Far Eastern situation, was denounced in the Tokyo Press as "lies, fraud, bluff, gibberish and ridiculous." It was about this period, it will be remembered, that the matter of supplies to Russia was so much to the fore and that in making his decision Mr Churchill afterwards described the Far East as being "peaceful" at that time.

There is an admirable parody of two lines of Shakespeare which says

*"Twice armed is he who hath his quarrel just  
And thrice armed he who gets his blow in fust!"*

From March 1941 at least, war in Asia involving the British Empire was inevitable and, from the same date (again, at least!) the importance of Thailand to us could not escape the intelligence of a half-wit. I repeat, we had seen what waiting on frontiers did in Europe, and that it was more ridiculous to suppose Thailand could be neutral than to suppose that Belgium could be neutral. All the reassuring words which came from our Ministry in Bangkok should not have obscured these facts and, moreover, we should by then have begun to recognise the Japanese as long-planners. It might have occurred to someone in the Foreign Office to recall that Sir Josiah Crosby, our Minister in Bangkok, after a long career as Vice-Consul in Siam and roundabout, was sent as British Minister to Panama in 1931 and remained there till 1934. But in 1934

he returned to Bangkok as British Minister and it was believed all over the Far East that that appointment was made on the request of the civilian element of the revolutionary party under Luang Pradit. Now it is not in human nature to believe that those who have asked for one's appointment are they who are the whole time working against one, and the interests one represents; yet there were Englishmen in Malaya and Siam who were certain that Luang Phibul, the leader of the militarist element, who eclipsed Luang Pradit, had been in the hands of the Japanese from 1934 onwards and that he had a pact with them. Events proved them right, and the story is outlined here as a warning of the length of Japanese preparation to say nothing of its thoroughness. What the Englishman who tried to outwit Luang Phibul did, and how he was stopped from home, will be outlined later. Let us here conclude the record of events less secret.

On 5th November, the Foreign Office newspaper in Tokyo came out with a list of what the United States must do 'or face the alternative'. The list included the demand "that Japan's co-prosperity sphere must be acknowledged and Manchukuo, China, Indo-China, Thailand, the Netherlands East Indies and other States and Protectorates must be allowed to establish their own political and economic relations with Japan without interference of any kind".

On 11th November, the Bangkok radio said 'The entry of Thailand into the war is only a matter of time. The Thai Government has in the past tried to lull your anxiety by saying the world situation is improving, but now we recognise that it is better to be frank. So to all Thais we say 'Get ready for war, learn how to fight under competent authorities'.

On 12th November the Japanese Press denounced Mr. Churchill's broadcast of two days earlier, as "sabre-rattling" and "outrageous" and "based on an estimate of Japan's strength which might need 'a fundamental correction'".

On the 13th November, the correspondent in Tokyo of the *Times* and the *New York Times* recorded:

"Roosevelt's, Knox's and Welles's Armistice Day speeches coming on top of Churchill's speech, produced such a fine impression of Anglo-American solidarity, that they were presented to the public only in carefully edited editions. But the Press still denounced them as 'outrageous,' 'arrogant' and 'insulting.' Some papers subordinated Roosevelt's

and Knox's speeches to attacks on Churchill by Senators K. Wheeler, Champ Clark and others whose arguments as reproduced in Japan read like copies of Japanese Press diatribes and create the impression of American disunity."

On the 17th November, Germany claimed control of the French North African Colonies and on the 20th November yet more talks began in Washington between the Japanese who had formerly been Ambassador in Germany, and who had actually signed the Treaty of Alliance, and the Japanese Admiral Nomura, and the American Government. The proposals the Japanese had to put forward were that the United States should cease helping Chiang Kai-shek, restore trade relations with Japan and ignore her alliance with Germany. In return Japan would specifically agree not to attack Thailand or the Dutch East Indies and, as evidence of her good faith, she would withdraw her troops from Southern Indo-China to Northern Indo-China.

Still there was no movement of the British troops on the Malayan frontier, and still we had no working agreement with Thailand!

On 29th November a notice was flashed on the screens of the Singapore cinemas "All British and Australian Forces Troops are requested to report immediately to their units."

The next day, 30th November, a statement was read in Tojo's name to a massed rally in Tokyo and at the same time similar meetings were organised in all the cities of Japan, Manchukuo and Japanese-controlled China. Tojo stated that British and American influence in East Asia must be 'purged with a vengeance'. The statement said: "Hostile nations, especially Great Britain and the United States, are trying to exploit East Asia at the expense of a thousand million people, for their own profit and ambitions. We are determined to create an Asiatic sphere so that a chorus of victory may go up in the camp of Justice as soon as possible. This sphere was created by Providence and nothing shall interfere with it." All these meetings simultaneously organised adopted a resolution that they would unite for the decisive battle to liberate themselves from the exploitations of Europe and America by the construction of a greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere as a guiding torch for mankind.

By the end of November an American high official (in fact, Sumner Welles) said that the chance of peace in the Pacific

was only one in ten, but still America expected the attack to be on Siam or Malaya, and not on herself. From 26th November onwards American newspapers daily reported increasing Japanese troop movements into Indo-China. From Hainan and from Japan as well as from Chinese ports convoys moved south.

On December 1st letters were received from Volunteer Headquarters, in Beach Road, Singapore, mobilising the Volunteers.

On 2nd December, Sir Robert Craigie, our Ambassador in Tokyo, informed journalists who lunched with him that he was virtually convinced that war was at hand. Presumably he also informed the Home Government.

On 3rd December the Japanese Press divided itself between headlines "Thailand's neutrality is in danger" and "Thailand should work with us." The *Nichi Nichi* said "We are frankly determined to become the leading power and stabilising factor in East Asia."

On 4th December news was flashing about the Pacific and was picked up in the Philippines that Japan was already on the march. Newspaper despatches from Shanghai reported great forces sailing from the mouth of the Yangtze River in China. Australian airmen, flying from Singapore, saw a great number of transport vessels, escorted by warships, headed into the Gulf of Siam, whence their destination could hardly be anywhere except Malaya or Thailand. On 7th December Thai troops were reported in the Japanese Press to be marching south and in America Mr Stimson and Colonel Knox were sitting together discussing the alarming movements of Japanese transports towards Siam when already, completely without their knowledge, Japanese bombers were on their way to Pearl Harbour. At the same time in Washington, Mr Frederick Moore, an American who was at varying periods of years Adviser to the Japanese Government, was pointing out to one of the Japanese Delegation that if an attack were launched upon Thailand or the Dutch possessions, the British would have to go to their defence, and that the American Government would join the conflict in the Pacific in the same way as it had joined the war in the Atlantic. The President would no doubt give orders to the Navy to fire on Japanese vessels on sight, but it would be an undeclared war. Mr. Moore adds:



Reminding him that the German and Italian Embassies were still open in Washington I made the suggestion that he might endeavour to keep the Japanese open

From London Mr Churchill was sending to the Siamese Prime Minister the following message There is a possibility of imminent Japanese invasion of your country If you are attacked defend yourself The preservation of the full independence and sovereignty of Thailand is a British interest and we shall regard an attack on you as an attack on ourselves

But it was no good regarding an attack on Thailand as an attack on ourselves when our troops were still on the Malayan side of the frontier

In Thailand the course of events was nicely staged At eleven o'clock in the evening while Luang Phibul was absent the Japanese presented to the Siamese Government a request that their troops should be allowed facilities to pass through Thailand and that the answer should be delivered by two the next morning The Siamese Government replied that they could not decide such an important matter without the Prime Minister and from two a m to eight a m on the morning of 8th December what actually happened is a little uncertain If there was any Siamese resistance to Japanese troops it was on more than a formality At eight o'clock Luang Phibul ordered resistance to cease and less than a week later he broadcast to his country He said I want you to know that in this instance I am not a traitor I would like you to know that *Japan is our greatest friend in life or death and we have to walk together shoulder to shoulder to fight our common enemy* All of you should know that Britain took a large piece of our territory in the south for which Japan is now fighting I hope our army will be proud to be in the same front with the Japanese army Presently we will ally ourselves with Japan

They made an open offensive and defensive alliance with Japan on December 11th and on 25th January 1942 Thailand declared war on the British Empire and the United States During all the intervening period our troops in Burma were not allowed to attack Siam from Burma and were kept waiting on the frontier just as our men had been kept waiting on the Malayan frontier

On 8th December 1941 Mr Churchill said in the House of Commons I do not yet know what part Siam—or Thailand—

will be called upon to play in this fresh war, but a report has reached us that the Japanese have landed troops in Singgora, which is in Siamese territory on the frontier of Malaya, not far from the landing they made on the British side of the frontier."

So on the 8th December we still did not know what part Siam was to play! In "Singapore and After," Lord Strabolgi says: "Information does not seem to have been obtained of the growth of Japanese influence in Thailand and the perfidy of the Thai government. It is possible, however, that not for the first time warnings were given to the British government and War Cabinet which went unheeded in the stress and turmoil of other events."

It was worse than "went unheeded." The man who realised the exact position in Siam was treated rather as though he were a criminal. There was no money in Malaya to be spent on Intelligence work and this man, Captain John Becker, spent more than £3,000 of his own money, only to have his work ruined by our diplomats and the order of the Foreign Office. It was the old, old story, no one who had anything unpleasant to say, or anything forceful to suggest, could be tolerated.

There has been a nice little pother behind the scenes since Siam declared war on us, as to how far her government was in alliance with Japan during the months preceding the outbreak of war. The Siamese themselves have since the outbreak of war done all they could to prove that they were already hand-in-glove with Japan. In the Ministry of Information Far East Department there are copies of news broadcasts from a French Far Eastern Station which state that at a banquet in Tokyo on 25th January, 1942, (the day Siam declared war on us) Nai Direk Jainam, who was Foreign Minister in Siam at the time of Pearl Harbour, and who is now described as *Charges d'Affaires* to Japan said, with every appearance of truth, that no government could make so speedy a decision as the Siamese Government had made "if it were not already minded to follow a fixed policy of collaboration." This speech was made all the more official through the presence of the important Siamese Phya Bahol, who was on a goodwill mission to Japan.

At the end of 1942 Luang Phibul stated at a banquet in Bangkok that his aim was to uproot Anglo-American influence from East Asia with the co-operation of Japan.

' Indeed, even the most official of officials no longer questions that our Foreign Office through our Minister, was nicely diddled by Luang Phibul. All that they can suggest is that the decision to side with the Japanese was a very sudden affair which had not the full support of the Government. For that suggestion there is but one piece of evidence, a story that appeared in the *Bangkok Times* of 1st April, 1942. The *Bangkok Times* quoted a statement made to a newspaper in Japan by Colonel Tamura, formerly Japanese Military Attaché in Bangkok. After praising Luang Phibul, Colonel Tamura said that 8th December, 1941 was the busiest day in Luang Phibul's life for he spent it in working for a military pact with Japan in spite of the presence at the time of pro-British and pro-American elements in the Thai Cabinet.

If this statement is accepted at its face-value, we have only the more reason to ask why did we never take advantage of those pro-British elements? Why was evidence offered never sifted? Why could not our officials use their plain ordinary wits and see that they were reproducing in Asia exactly the same situation which obtained in Europe in 1939-40? Why, in face of the reiterated threats to Thailand and its obvious importance to us, did we not act?

The answer is simple

Just as the government of the day required for its moral support a declaration of war from France in 1939, so the government of the day in 1941 had only one object, to ensure—not that we should be well-placed strategically in the East, not that our troops and supplies there should be used to greatest advantage, not to manifest more initiative—but to see to it that we were not involved in a Pacific war without the involvement of the United States. On the 8th December, 1941 Mr Churchill said in the House of Commons: "We must hold ourselves very fortunate, and I think we may rate our affairs not wholly ill-guided, that we were not attacked alone by Japan in our period of weakness after Dunkirk, or at any time in 1940 before the United States had fully realised the dangers which threatened the whole world and had made much advance in its military preparation."

If one side in war has only one interest, and that is to fight, and the other side is chiefly interested in seeing that another nation fights with her, it is more than obvious which side will have the advantage. We made no move at all in Thailand

through the official fear that any move on our side would upset the isolationist and the pacifist sentiment in the United States—a sentiment which is invariably hostile to the British Empire. And it may be stated without fear of effective contradiction that to view a war in this way was the most idiotic mistake of all time. Hitler's forgetfulness of the Russian winter was nothing like it in spite of a certain remark in the House of Commons.

Handled as one British Intelligence Officer, Captain Becker wished to handle it, the situation in Thailand could have been turned to our advantage without precipitating war earlier in 1941. But had it precipitated war, we should have been far better off for although the Japanese were unlikely to leave the Philippines unattacked on their flank and although the Tokio Press had made many significant references to the pre-occupation of the American fleet in the Atlantic and both these facts indicate an attack on America simultaneously with war on us, had America not been involved at least the American fleet would not have been neatly arranged in Pearl Harbour for the Japanese bombers nor were all Japan's amazing amphibious expeditions ready to start out in the middle of the year. Moreover Eastern Siam is under rains between July and November.

Above all why in the name of Heaven even after 8th December must we wait for Thailand to declare war on us?

All writers of books about Singapore have one thing in common: they agree that there was a lack of virile leadership, a softness at the top as one of them puts it. But that top was at Home and not at Singapore. For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

In the last few months official sources have striven to anticipate the biting criticism which (with so much more!) is their due by the statement that we could never have moved into Siam and linked up with our forces in Burma because we had not sufficient men in Malaya to do so.

The answers to that statement are two and they are final.

India was the natural supply base for Malaya and from the day when Japanese troops marched into Indo China to the day when they attacked Malaya, a full sixteen months elapsed.

There was therefore ample time to move into Malaya such ideal troops of the Indian Army as Gurkhas and Garhwalis. It is useless for anyone to say that at that time India was fully occupied in providing for our armies in the loosely-named

Middle East (many of whom sat there for years without hearing a shot fired) because the fact is that she was not

On the other hand if the men in Malaya could not be reinforced and if they who numbered between 60 000 and 70 000 were not enough to cross the Malayan Frontier and link with our Burmese forces it was never right—and it could never have seemed right—to defend Malaya at all. The war against the Japanese should then have been staged adequately in Burma and in Java. True the decision not to defend Singapore would almost certainly have brought down the Government at Home but—despite Lord Baldwin—it is not the first business of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to maintain itself in office. What does the fate of a handful of politicians matter compared with the fate of tens of thousands of soldiers millions of civilians and hundreds of thousands of square miles of territory? No politician is irreplaceable.

Finally even official sources with all their breath taking ingenuity in formulating excuses have never attempted to explain why 40 000 men new to the tropics were landed on Singapore Island only a few days before the surrender to be marched straight into the Japanese prison camps.

Up to the very moment of landing they could have been re-directed by wireless to Burma or the Netherlands Indies—or indeed to anywhere in the wide world save Singapore! The very fact of their landing convicts the War Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff Committee of being completely out of touch with the whole situation.

At the time of the Indian Mutiny Lord Elgin was leading an expedition to China. When that expedition arrived at Singapore and he heard news of the Mutiny on his own initiative he diverted his men to India.

Had the Commander in Singapore in 1942 been at all alive to his duty he would have forbidden that last 10 000 men to land.

But initiative in the Army (as in political life) has long been attacked and they who manifested it have with probably not more than one exception been dealt with as criminals.

Early in June 1944 it was stated in the *Daily Telegraph* that Lord Wavell had written a character sketch of the late General Wingate for a book named *Wingate's Raiders*. After Wingate had to organise guerilla warfare in Abyssinia in 1940 he sent in to G.H.Q. a Memorandum which says Lord

Wavell would almost have justified my arresting him for insubordination

Only 'a man to man talk' prevented Wingate's arrest but other Generals are not given to 'man-to-man talks' (and under no sane system would or could they be necessary in order to prevent the arrest of an officer whose crime is that he has used his intelligence)

Early in 1939 an English officer not otherwise mentioned in this book wrote an essay expressing his certainty that France would collapse and all that would follow from that collapse. Unfortunately for him that paper fell into the hands of very senior officers and he was placed under arrest.

The arrest of Captain Becker who was unquestionably right concerning Siam and her Government I recorded at the beginning of this book. His arrest just before the outbreak of the Pacific War was a *cause celebre* in Singapore. Moreover it was fair warning to everyone whether soldier or civilian of how anyone would be treated who attempted to exercise his or her brains, will or patriotism.

How could we NOT lose Singapore?

And Sir Josiah Crosby before returning home and while being detained for some months by the Japanese in Siam received the KCMG in the Honours List of January 1942—presumably for his skilful diplomacy.

#### IV

### THE FIGHTING SERVICES THE COLONIAL OFFICE THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND THE IMPERIAL DEFENCE COUNCILS

AT the time when the Left and the Pacifists were demanding Sanctions and possibly war against Italy over Abyssinia our Mediterranean Fleet had ammunition which it was calculated would last exactly one hour if it had to engage in enemy.

The first allotment of money for tank armour only a short time before this war began was £1 000

The year before this war began, the officers of a well-known English regiment clubbed together to have a dummy anti-tank gun made, as they had no hope of obtaining the real thing. It was dragged about on manoeuvres by a lance-corporal. The officer who informed me stated that this happened almost simultaneously with questions asked in the House of Commons whether our men were equipped with Bren guns and anti-tank guns. The Minister questioned replied that they were.

A member of the War Office remarked to me one day that at the time of the Munich Crisis our army's equipment was just about as new and as useful as bows and arrows, and I myself saw that among the last trainload of men to arrive home from Brest after the collapse of France few, if any, had arms produced later than 1917.

Who is responsible?

Primarily, the Treasury which allots money to the various departments and whose sanction is required for expenditure, secondarily, the House of Commons whose attitude to Military and Naval Estimates is decided by the size of the Pacifist vote.

It may be asked: could not the Admirals or the Generals show up such a situation? But the Services have no direct representation in the House of Commons. Most unfortunately, a desperate Commander-in-Chief cannot walk in and harangue the Members. It is true there is a Secretary of State for War, a First Lord of the Admiralty and a Secretary of State for Air, but who are the occupants of these purely political posts? Long ago Gilbert and Sullivan provided the answer.

When I was young I served a term

As office boy to an attorney's firm

I cleaned the windows and I washed the floors

And I polished up the handles of the big front doors

I polished all the handles so successfull-ee

That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Nav-ee,

Yes but in the 1930's a terrible war was looming. Was there no man in the Services who dared draw the country's attention to the plight in which she lay?

How could he?

At the very best, he might get a couple of articles in a newspaper which would constitute a nine days' wonder. He certainly could not address public meetings because to fill a public meeting in England needs an organisation to whip up its membership. Besides, a fighting man is a fighting man and

he would be deterred through his own lack of political knowledge, and uncertain how such a dramatic move would affect foreign affairs

Therefore, in the words of one of them "Senior officers do the best with what they can get, and hope to God that trouble won't come during their period of service" But when it does come very few men are great enough to attack with nothing behind them, and yet to attack is the only means of winning a war Admiral Cunningham did it in the Mediterranean when he had next-door to nothing, but in this war the British Army has yet to find its Foch, whose decision was "Outflanked on the right, outflanked on the left Situation on the whole excellent—I am going to advance" But of course Foch had not behind him a Government which was steadily preferring to supply foreigners with arms instead of its own men

Added to paucity of supplies and the sense of insecurity engendered in officers of high rank who cannot really rely on the politicians behind them, and have themselves no direct contact with the opinion of the country there is of course the general imperviousness to new ideas This imperviousness is not confined to Brass Hats as newspaper editors would have us suppose, it exists in at least 95 per cent of humanity, the editors included But it is deadly in its effect and a proper appreciation of air power and all that it involves has been conspicuously lacking in this war I am assured by a man with a most practical knowledge of his subject that the collapse of the first rosy hopes in Tunisia was mainly due to the absolute refusal of the Allied Command to understand that it is now useless to land an army unless ground fit for the construction of aerodromes is immediately to hand

Certainly in Hongkong or rather in regard to Hongkong the stupidity concerning air power was absolute and complete I have already mentioned how the military airfield was placed on the mainland and how officers in Hongkong during its construction called it a present for the Japs, and I have told how Lord Moyne assured a brother-peer in private conversation that Hongkong would be held, only three days before the surrender, but what on earth are we to make of Lord Moyne's statement in the House of Lords on the 8th January, 1942 Lord Moyne, as Secretary of State for the Colonies then said in answer to a question "We have few details as to what actually took place We do know, however, that the plan for



creating a strong defensive line had been carried out on the mainland. That line was about 15 miles in length, covered by pill-boxes in depth and sited about six or seven miles from Kowloon on very favourable hilly ground. **IT WAS NEVER INTENDED THAT THE MAIN LINE OF DEFENCE SHOULD BE ON THE MAINLAND.** The plan always was that this line should be held long enough to allow the evacuation of Kowloon and the destruction of the great docks and engineering establishments which existed in Kowloon. We have every reason to believe that that plan was carried out and that demolitions were effected before evacuation took place.

So it was never intended to hold the airfield we had made! And there was no aerodrome on the island.

Then why put the R A F contractors to the trouble of making it? At least if it had not been made the Japs could not have used it in their attack on the island.

On 27th January, 1942, Mr Churchill said in the House of Commons "We reinforced Singapore to a considerable extent and Hongkong to the extent which we were advised would be sufficient to hold the island for a long time."

And the military advisers be it noted, did not suffer a convulsive change after the fall of Hongkong.

It is obvious that we must examine in some detail the relations between the fighting Services and the various Ministries if we are to discover exactly with whom the responsibility lies. And if we do not discover with whom the responsibility lies and throw those people out, we shall certainly not recover the Far East and we may even yet bungle affairs in Europe.

I have already stated that the co-operation of the Ministry of Economic Warfare with our India Command was in 1943 so lacking as to cause serious concern to Staff Officers, and there is no doubt at all that departmental jealousy and exclusiveness plays a terrible part even between the three Fighting Services, and far more between the Services and the various Government Departments. Yet, with so much at stake Departmental jealousy is in exactly the same category of sin (though more subtle) as dockers who steal provisions from lifeboats.

To call the 1941 Colonial Ministry 'touchy' is to put it very kindly. There was an occasion in this war, when we were losing shipping at a terrible rate, on which the Governor of an important British Colony communicated facts concerning the

movement of U boats to the Colonial Office. The reply was "Sir—would kindly remember that he was Governor of — and not of the entire British Empire."

A High Commissioner in the Pacific in 1938 made himself as unpleasant as possible to an official who prevented a Japanese from buying some land on a British Island. The land happened to adjoin an aerodrome and the next land the Jap tried to buy was beside the wireless station, but the official who prevented the purchase—an usual move—though he was acting in accordance with commonsense was acting against the official policy. The official policy was to be pleasant to the Japanese and, of course, the Japanese were very pleasant in return. They even gave the wives of British officials presents of silk stockings increasing in fineness and number with the rank of the husband. These and many other little pleasantnesses would cease if Japanese could no longer buy land where they liked. And the appeasers did not wish them to cease.

I am not suggesting these people were venal or traitors. I do state they were complete fools—but they had behind them the whole weight of the Colonial Office.

In considering this question of co-operation as a whole, attention must be given to an entirely new point. Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, Commander-in-Chief, Far East, unquestionably did everything he could do to make the War Cabinet realise the necessity for aeroplanes in Malaya (where, incidentally, we had troubled to make the aerodromes) but Sir Robert, not getting his aeroplanes, must have known that he was vastly overdoing the note of confidence in his Press Conferences while fighting was in process in Malaya. To that note of overconfidence some observers attribute a good deal of white civilian "complacency" in Malaya but the explanation for it is very simple and is again departmental. Journalists have an impression that they really know what is going on in the world, political and otherwise. Those who live in the political world, however, know how widely wrong or even more often entirely ignorant, the Press really is, and they feel no particular urge either to alter that state of affairs or to provide material for newspaper attack on the Government machine of which they are a part.

The position of officials who knew that the wrong line was being taken late in the 1930's was almost identical with that of the Senior Officers of the Fighting Services. If they resigned—

that is if they threw away their livelihood with no prospect of other employment—as in the interests of their country it would have been their duty to do did the means exist of making effective protest—they could not have found those means. How could they appeal to the public? And how would the public respond to that appeal? Moreover lacking strong leadership what could even the public do?

These are not the faults as we are so often told of an old hierarchy. Worse happens in America and the same things in our own Dominions. The Canadian Army remained in England because General McNaughton developed the idea that he would only lead a Canadian Army into the field a complete army which would take years to build up. He would not go as simply a part of the British Army. One of the many results of this was that the Canadian Prime Minister Mr Mackenzie King was thoroughly booed and denounced when he reviewed Canadian troops at Aldershot in 1941 for they thought it was he who was detaining them from foreign service. This fact was kept out of the English Press but not out of the Canadian Press.

Peculiar ideas also obtained in some Australians. In the period between the wars Australia completely dominated by her Trade Unions and with an enormous League of Nations Union was thought by some to have lost something of her former virtue and certainly to resent discipline. Since the days of Singapore magnificent is the only word to describe her but in Malaya and Singapore that word did not apply to the Australians. Mr Gallagher the *Daily Express* War Correspondent and author of *Retreat in the East* who is an Irish South African wrote: 'The behaviour of a large number of Australian troops was peculiar. Suffice it to say that Major-General Gordon Bennett often told war reporters in interviews that his men would never retreat because they did not know how to retreat—they had not been trained to retreat. The spirit was admirable but the wisdom of the decision doubtful. How could the Australians be expected to make an orderly fighting withdrawal if such a manoeuvre had not been included in their training?

The fact is that their withdrawal was neither fighting nor orderly. Again the English Press omitted this news but Sir Keith Murdoch the Australian newspaper proprietor some months later let himself go in the *Melbourne Argus* and on

17th August, 1942 in the *Adelaide Advertiser* In the concluding section he said: "But the worst trouble we were under was the indiscipline of small elements that were never thoroughly digested by the better men Too long has it been a distorted tradition of the last war that discipline is not necessary to attain high-fighting value, indeed that indiscipline marked the first Australian Imperial Force All who knew the stern battle-discipline of the earlier soldiers know how mistaken is this view The main part of the Australian Force was magnificent For such men we can never be too grateful nor can the nation's sympathy and help in their captivity be in any way limited Today in Singapore, re-named Shonan, 'The City of Light and Peace in the South' the Japanese are celebrating Our own men are in prison camps and we know little about them Could they get a message freely to us what would they say? What is their daily thought and prayer? Undoubtedly the message would be that we should be with all our hearts and minds applying through all our intense activities the bitter lesson of the Malayan campaign They know how strong and cunning the enemy may be, but they know, too, in what fighting ways he can be defeated They would have us to know from their own harsh experience that weakened discipline must be eradicated from the Army wherever it shows up so that those who protect the heart of the nation may be strong until victory is won

Another person let himself go in Australia He was the Raja of Sarawak On arrival in Australia he said that only one British officer had wanted to take the offensive in Malaya and he had been suppressed This was a reference to Captain Becker and here we return to the military side, for when that officer saw General Percival before being sent home at the behest of the Foreign Office, General Percival said he could do nothing In other words, we are back again at the political stranglehold over the military function A very great man in such circumstances would have made his own decision and told the Foreign Office to go to hell, chancing their recalling him too But it would have taken a very great man to do it

In considering this incident we realise the full force of the question asked by Lieut-General Martin in the *Daily Telegraph* almost exactly three years later He was writing on the 7th February, 1944, of the Bridgehead in Italy which is

still but a Bridgehead as I write on the 21st March. He began. The past week has seen the bridgehead crystallise to the accompaniment of heavy fighting on the Cassino front. It remains an enigma. We came, we saw, we settled down in a seaside lodging. After thirteen days the enemy was ready to counter attack. By this the sixteenth day the opposing fronts have evidently set hard, if either is now to expand it must first break the other. Why did the landing force remain so far as we may judge almost entirely passive for the first ten days or so of its career? As to that one man's guess is as good as another's. My guess—it is a pure surmise—is this. Not for the first time perhaps Anglo-American arms may have suffered from over rigidity of planning.

The General went on to point out how impossible it is for a local commander to fight effectively if he cannot use his own decision and initiative. But in this war the local commander has never been able to do that. He could not do it in Italy, he could not do it in Burma, he could not do it in Malaya. And the Commander in Chief is no less tied. This is a description of the state of affairs by the time Singapore Island was invaded. There was a Pacific War Council in London under the chairmanship of Mr Winston Churchill. It included Australian, New Zealand and Dutch representatives, Mr Amery representing India and a varied collection of senior officers. General Wavell, with a Dutch Admiral and an American Air Force officer on his staff, was then in command from Malaya to the coast of Australia, but Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands and parts of the North American Continent were under American command, while Burma came under the Commander in Chief in India. General Wavell's propositions had to be sent in duplicate to London and Washington, who then exchanged notes. When they had made up their minds the result would come before the Pacific War Council in London and the High Command in Washington. Then, if and when agreement was reached, Wavell would be informed!

no Ministry of Defence and the three Services Departments remain autonomous. For the purpose of maintaining personal supervision over the conduct of the war, which I do under the authority of the War Cabinet and the Defence Committee, I have at my disposal a small staff headed by Major-General Ismay, which works under the long-established procedure and machinery of the pre-war Committee of Imperial Defence, and forms a part of the War Cabinet Secretariat.

'While, as I have said, I take constitutional responsibility for everything that is done and not done, and am quite ready to take the blame when things go wrong—as they very often do and as they are very likely to do in future in many ways—I do not of course conduct this war from day to day myself, it is conducted from day to day and in its future outlook by the Chiefs of Staff Committee, namely, the First Sea Lord, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and the Chief of Air Staff. These officers sit together every day and often twice a day. They give executive orders to the Commanders-in-Chief in the various theatres. They advise me, they advise the Defence Committee and the War Cabinet on large questions of war strategy and war-policy. I am represented on the Chiefs of Staff Committee by Major-General Ismay, who is responsible for keeping the War Cabinet and myself informed on all matters requiring higher decision. On account of the immense scope and complexity of the task when fighting is going on literally all over the world, and when strategy and supply are so closely intermingled the Chiefs of Staff Committee are assisted by a Vice-Chiefs of Staff Committee, which relieves them of a great mass of important questions of a secondary order. At the disposal of the Chiefs of Staff Committee and of the Vice-Chiefs Committee are the Joint Planning Staffs and the Joint-Intelligence Staffs of the three Services consisting of specially selected officers. In addition there are the three General Staffs of Army, Navy and Air Force between whom constant collaboration proceeds at all levels where combined operations are involved. I think it necessary to put this matter in some detail before the House because, although it sounds complicated, it is necessary to understand it.'

<sup>1</sup> Headline *Malayan Tribune* January 28th 1942 less than three weeks before the fall of Singapore. Responsibility for the Far East rests with me—Churchill

## Complicated!

(A man I know well was sent into the War Office to join what he called the *Whitehall Paper Chase*. He steadily wrote Minutes in books and after about a fortnight the books came back with many others added, but he could not discover that any executive person ever took the slightest notice. One day he saw a Minute written in red ink and thought it a very good idea. Perhaps they would take some notice of what he had to say if he wrote in red ink. So he did it. Back came the book in 24 hours a promptness never before remotely achieved and beneath his Minute was written "Kindly note that the use of red ink is restricted to His Majesty's Secretary of State." Beneath that he wrote the comment "It is greatly to be regretted that the use of red tape is not similarly restricted.")

In 1810 the Duke of Wellington wrote home to Lord Bradford, the Secretary of State for War. "My Lord, if I attempted to answer the mass of futile correspondence that surrounds me I should be debarred from all serious business of campaigning. I must remind your Lordship—for the last time—that so long as I retain an independent position I shall see to it that no officer under my command is debarred, by attending to the futile drivelling of mere quill-driving in your Lordship's office from attending to his first duty—which is as always, to train the private men under his command that they may without question beat any force opposed to them in the field."

In May 1942 General Auchinleck had copies of this letter sent to all his Headquarters officers in the Middle East.

The pity is that the Duke of Wellington's letter is not read thrice daily to the War Cabinet. In Malaya for example, no one could possibly say exactly where leadership should lie. Sir Robert Brooke-Popham was there as Commander-in-Chief, Far East, although Sir Henry Pownall had been appointed to succeed him in the November of 1941. Sir Shenton Thomas was Governor of the Straits Settlements and, as such, the head of the Civil Government. On the outskirts of Singapore were the headquarters of Mr Duff Cooper who having been sent out on a Government mission, was later appointed British Resident Cabinet Minister in the Far East. The *Straits Times* suggested that he should be appointed Dictator of Singapore and the appointment of any one final authority on the spot would have been a vast improvement on what took place.

once of the B B C staff, has written a book published in the United States of America, in which he explains what a grand idea it was to send by the long route round the Cape to Malaya a complete orchestra to improve the morale of the inhabitants! Shipping space for violinists instead of planes! They should have sent out harpists!

No wonder the *Straits Times* wanted a dictator and that when Burma was attacked the *Rangoon Gazette* came out with a couple of headlines

"OUR FINEST FIGHTING EFFICIENCY WILL BE WHEN THE  
BUREAUCRATS HAVE GONE"  
FAITH IN OUR FIGHTING MEN BUT SAVE US FROM  
NON-BELLIGERENT DOPES!"

Our Intelligence Services were four, not including an Air Intelligence Branch. There was a Military Intelligence, the Naval Intelligence, the Police and the information gathered by the Customs. All that they had to say was co-ordinated in a circular to all Intelligences and in other directions a surprising number of copies were made of the despatches to the Foreign Office of His Britannic Majesty's Minister in Bangkok. It was no doubt as a result of these despatches that American journalists state that their friends in the British Forces admitted that we should never move across the Siamese frontier. Yet although the Intelligence circular used up a good deal of paper and spread over a wide area an English-speaking diplomat in Tokio was assuring a European diplomat that the Japanese had only 50 000 troops in Southern Indo-China a month after our Intelligence knew there were 200 000 Japanese shock troops there. That was known in August, 1941, and where could Japan send 200 000 shock troops from Cambodia save into Siam or into landing-barges? In either case their only possible destination was Malaya.

How in this morass of persons all suffering constant interference from Home anything functioned at all is a major mystery. All that was required was one man with the sense to say to the Army "Advance Fire". As for the Government at Home, it should have been treated as Napier treated it. At the time of the Afghan Wars, Napier was solemnly warned that on no account must he annexe Sind. He immediately annexed it and sent home the one-word message, 'Peccavi' ["I have Sind (sinned)"].



Aristotle wrote that the Court Favourite and the Demagogue are in fact the same person each flattering and fawning upon the source of power. Indeed Democracy, of all forms of Government offers the greatest opportunities of exploitation by the base and it is the base who seek to persuade a people that war will not come again and that it is, in itself, an evil thing. War is not a factor in morality, it is a state of existence, and in that state of existence all human qualities, both good and evil find more opportunities for expression than in quieter times. The earth's history is mainly the history of warfare. The causes of war are inherent in human nature and there is no rational ground and certainly no Christian ground for believing that warfare will vanish from this globe.<sup>1</sup>

These are not pleasant sayings. They are true ones. A nation which is not prepared to fight for the character it has developed and the ideals it has enshrined is fit for nothing. But that means that as Viscount Wavell has phrased it, if you want easy living you must be prepared to protect that easy living by hard fighting. Easy living is in fact, a low and vulgar thing to offer to humanity and one which does not satisfy it, and unless and until our politicians are ready to speak the truth to the people however unpleasant that truth may be, we shall not regain Singapore nor is there any certainty that we shall not lose much more. Persons in public life ought to do more than tell the truth to the people. They ought to denounce in the utmost outspokenness of phrase every man who prophesies pleasant things, for that man is either a liar or a fool and I have frequently commented on how far the promotion of those who make themselves pleasant has contributed to our great losses in this war.

As an illustration of what I mean I must here add a personal story.

In the summer of 1940 my old friend whom we will call Mrs "X" on several occasions came rushing up to London from her country house near the English Channel. She was accompanied by her maid and her valuable jewellery which she had taken out of the bank. I could not understand why she was taking these hurried journeys in a state of some agitation and her elderly maid (burdened with the charge of the jewellery) on the second occasion appealed to me.

<sup>1</sup> The reader who requires the detailed argument is referred to "The Commonsense of Christianity" by the same author.

"Miss," she demanded, "is there going to be an invasion?"

"No —, there is not," I replied

Well, Miss, the ladies say that the General says there is and they have both taken their jewellery out of the bank and I am worried to death about it "

The fourth time they appeared in London I tackled Mrs "X" very downrightly

What is this damn nonsense of running up and down to London and cluttering up the railways?" I demanded

She then admitted that her daughter kept giving in her positive dates on which Hitler's invasion of England would begin. Her daughter's information came from her own and brother's old friend who occupies a most important military-political position

I finally persuaded the old lady and her maid to take no notice of this and at Christmas when I was staying with them the maid (whose particular job it very definitely was not) hurried into my room to unpack

'Well, Miss,' she said, almost before she was inside the room, 'do you still say there's not going to be an invasion?'

"There is going to be no invasion," I replied

An hour later I was crossing the hall when the daughter of the house came home. The same maid rushed up to her with

'Well, my lady, does the General still say there's going to be an invasion?'

'Oh, yes'

"Huh!" answered the maid with overwhelming scorn

'Well, Miss Crisp says there isn't'

That was the merited judgment of a member of the British public on the man who was then and still is the occupier of a key position

Is it too much to suggest that our spring-cleaning should begin at the top and that someone a little less pleasant should be provided?

## V

### JAPAN

IN May, 1942 the Ministry of Information telephoned to me and said that a Kensington Debating Society ("You know what it will be like") had asked them to send a

provocative speaker who could start a lively debate. An official voice informed me that the Ministry had thereupon thought of me and would I go, and what did I think sufficiently provocative as a subject? I replied that I would go and that my motion would be "That the average Englishman is fully responsible for the present situation in the Pacific." There was a gasp at the other end of the telephone and agreement that that would do, and the debate sticks in my mind because a well-known magistrate, a man certainly not without brains, proved entirely incapable of understanding one point I made, and it is that lack of understanding, so widespread in the white world, that is one of the causes of our loss of Singapore.

I stated as clearly as I could that all the denunciation of Japanese "treachery" at Pearl Harbour not only left me a little testy but got us all nowhere. Japan I pointed out, was not a Christian country, nor was she a Western country, and she does not accept our standards of ethics or behaviour. It therefore follows that she could not be morally condemned for not acting in accordance with those standards. If a person has lived by one penal code and is suddenly judged by another from the other side of the earth, he is practically bound to be condemned but that condemnation will almost certainly not be justice.

I had the greatest difficulty in making my audience see, and some of them never did see that where a whole trend of thought is different from our own we cannot condemn some particular divergence as an offence though we can of course—if we choose—say that the whole of the divergent thought is so abhorrent to us that it must be extirpated root and branch.

And until we understand how divergent Japanese thought is from our own we shall never be able to cope with Japan.

A year later, in June, 1943 a book was published named 'Tokyo Record'. The author of this book was so struck by the tremendous differences between Japanese thought and Western thought and all their implications, that he endeavoured to enumerate the contrasts. He pointed out that the Western conception of the world is based on Greek philosophy, a respect for law which marked the Roman Empire and (although the author does not say so) blossomed in England and all that Christian thought has added to Western civilisation in which individualism is so strongly marked and

Divinity something altogether greater than this world and incomprehensible

The Japanese conception, he points out, is pre-Hellenic, pre-scientific, pre-rational and pre-individualistic. It is based on the Oriental idea of the divinity of all nature ruled by a divine will according to patriarchal principles which give every individual and nation its proper place. The dominating factor of Oriental thought is the family, not, as in the West, based on the relations between husband and wife but always on the relations between parents and children—a conception which easily leads to the acceptance of the Emperor who is both a god and a father.

Moreover, since this world was born of the gods and was not created in perfection, it never produced in the Japanese minds the perfectionism of the West and therefore no search for perfection. What ever is, is equally part of divine nature. The concepts of abstract good or bad do not arise. There is no conflict between god and man nor between man and nature. There is no moral law, no original sin, no fall of man, no dread of hell. As one Japanese put it: Only bad people like the Chinese need a moral law, the Japanese being gods need only to look into their own hearts to know what to do. The only law that rules is the will of the gods, who are no paragons of virtue in the Western sense, and the only offence is disrespect or disobedience to higher-ranking gods. The Japanese call this their realism which takes man and nature as they are and tries to avoid being taken in by them. This is the source of their suspicious nature and their treachery.

In 1942 a friend of mine witnessed typical examples of both the suspicious nature and the treachery of the Japanese. The Press Attaché of the Polish Embassy in Tokyo, Alexander Piskor, was so ill after suffering six months' solitary confinement at the hands of the Japanese that they removed him to the prison hospital. While he was there he was left in a bath unattended and took the opportunity to poke his head into the corridor.

There he saw a Japanese who demanded "Who are you?" Mr. Piskor told him, whereupon the Japanese said: "My name is Ishimaru. I have been in Poland and when I was there I interviewed Pilsudski. In 1936 I wrote 'Japan Must Fight Britain'." "Well, you must be all right," retorted Alexander Piskor, "Japan is fighting Britain. So what are you doing here?"

But before Ishimaru could reply a warder appeared, and Mr Piskor never saw the Japanese author again. But he heard that the man had been sentenced to death and that his sentence had been changed to one of ten years' imprisonment, which he was then undergoing.

Everyone who knows Japan makes the same suggestion on hearing this story—the suggestion that Ishimaru was sentenced for giving the game away in his book, and this suggestion is borne out by a further incident which Mr. Piskor recounted to me.

Some months after Pearl Harbour and all the American denunciations of Japanese treachery, a Japanese writer devoted an article to the question of whether the Japanese attack was or was not treacherous. His conclusion is as interesting as it is curious. He decided that a Foreign Secretary or any member of a Government who declared war was giving away the secrets of the Naval and Military Commanders before the time was ripe and thus robbing them of their effectiveness. Therefore a person who made a declaration of war on another country was, in fact, guilty of treachery to his own country.

Such is the gulf between Japanese thought and our thought, and the cause must be realised.

A study of Japanese mythology is essential to anyone who would deal with the Japanese, but equally essential is the realisation that that mythology is not something important several thousand years ago, but a vital force in their lives today. No mythology would please the rules of propriety but Japanese mythology is probably without parallel in some details of its coarseness, and this fact allied to their "realism" accounts for the coarse brutality of their treatment of prisoners so that, while one may and must hate the fact, it is quite pointless to condemn the Japanese for it. They are living by their code, a code which finds its parallel in the life of their own country, whereas, when the Germans choose to indulge in torture and rape they are going against the whole mental structure of Western civilisation of which they are geographically a part. Again, the Japanese are the people who are really certain that they are a race apart, with divine immunity, whereas the Germans' *Herrenvolk* conception is spurious and dumped on them from without.

Even a slight comprehension of these facts would prevent the Western nations loudly accusing the Japanese of "treachery".

at Pearl Harbour and, indeed, would have had them all on the look-out for exactly that treachery.

As long ago as 1898 the elaborate spy-system of the Japanese was well-known, at any rate to the diplomatic world, and Sir John Pratt has recorded what good use the Japanese made of their time in Peking in that year. An English diplomatic party was staying in the Western Hills that summer, and they sent in to Peking for a Japanese barber, bargaining that he should do the double journey—fifteen miles each way—and cut the hair of half-a-dozen members of the party for an inclusive fee of three dollars. He rode out in the morning on a Chinese donkey, off which he fell on the way, tearing his old European flannel trousers. To repair the damage he demanded an extra twenty cents and, by way of a joke, the young Englishmen disputed the claim. After a tremendous ado about it they finally gave the little man his twenty cents, fully believing from his appearance that the twenty cents was a tremendously important matter to him. Two years later, when the Boxer Rebellion broke out, the barber suddenly abandoned his disguise, put on his Colonel's uniform, joined up at the Japanese Legation and took part in the defence of the foreign Legations at Peking while, no doubt, all the information he had accumulated in the two years was already filed in the proper quarter.

From 1925 to 1938 Sir John Pratt was Adviser on Far Eastern affairs to our Foreign Office. No doubt he reiterated again and again to the Foreign Office that every Japanese living outside his own country is a remarkably efficient spy for Japan and no doubt, too, Sir John informed them that they must everywhere expect barbers or fishermen to turn into Colonels in ten seconds, once war started.

But if Sir John told the Foreign Office all this, they must have taken remarkably little notice.

That the Western nations could expect no formal declaration of war from Japan was fully clear from the start of the Russo-Japanese war in 1904. The Japanese then began the attack on Russia with a torpedo-attack on her fleet as it lay in port, forty-eight hours before they declared war. And while their torpedo boats were creeping into Port Arthur, the Japanese Ambassador was present at a ball given by the Czar and Czarina in St. Petersburg. He went home and recorded in his diary how completely he had fooled the Russians.

As for Japanese methods of diplomatic dealing, we had them very fully illustrated in 1902—the date of the first Anglo-Japanese Alliance. At the time as Baron Hayashi Kaoru, the Japanese Minister in London, was negotiating for that Alliance, the Marquis Ito Hirobumi was on his way to St Petersburg to negotiate an agreement with Russia. When our Foreign Office discovered this, Lord Lansdowne warned Baron Hayashi, and Sir Francis Bertie, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, bluntly demanded information. According to Japanese sources, Sir Francis Bertie ended the conversation by informing the Baron, "Well, you'll have to be careful, very careful"—It was advice we might well have followed ourselves.

But—to round off the story—our officers in Hongkong were entertained by the Japanese Consul General on that night of 1941 which ended with the attack on Hongkong.

It is no use blaming the Japanese for their treachery. All England and America have to do is blame themselves for their folly.

Even our conceptions of "realism" are not the same. For instance, the Japanese claim that their Emperors are descended from the gods in an unbroken line over a period of more than two thousand years. To Western eyes this claim of unbroken descent (no matter from whom!) becomes a mere fake when it is known that sons by adoption are counted in the Japanese royal family as identical with sons born into the family. In other words, the really old family of the world is not the Japanese royal family, but the English royal family, for the present King George VI traces his descent exactly to King Alfred in the year 800, and Alfred was a descendant of princes stretching far back into unrecorded history.

Equally, although their Emperors are divine beings, and although many Japanese today doff their caps to the palace walls in token of reverence, for a very long period in Japanese history the Emperors were confined as it were, to the duties of a high priest while the country—or more exactly the islands of Japan—was governed by a Shogun, that is a military dictator.

Most modern historians believe that the Japanese were originally of two strains: an Asiatic people and a Polynesian people who descended on the Japanese islands before the birth of Christ. The history the Japanese are taught in schools is that the first Japanese Emperor was Jimmu Tenno,

the world without large scale acquiescence on the part of the population so the Japanese army in Manchuria could not have run counter to the will of the people in its career of conquest. A Japanese politician said at the time—How could a handful of soldiers have led 70 million Japanese by the nose had it not been that the soldiers' action touched a chord to which the whole nation was ready to respond?

And here arise two points of the greatest practical importance. It has been suggested by various onlookers that the sudden launching of the Pacific War by the Japanese Forces was a movement made without the knowledge of their government and that this alleged fact is a sign of disunity which might lead us to hope for revolt in Japan. Nothing could be more unlikely! The Japanese are only too accustomed to moves by their military people which could only be a sign of disunity in a people nurtured in a Western view of the importance of the civil government and an ordered foreign policy.

Moreover—and this is the all important point—it follows from this that neither the capture nor the capitulation of the civil government is likely to end a Japanese war. Just as at periods of the Roman Empire individual commanders conducted great campaigns quite independently of the government in Rome so Allied possession of Tokyo (probably the most difficult military proposition in the world) would not necessarily mean and is not even likely to mean the collapse of the Japanese armies in Burma Malaya China the Pacific Islands or wherever they happen to be at the time of the home government's capitulation.

The way in which one nation can misunderstand another is wonderfully illustrated in a book by one American journalist who says of the Japanese—Their politeness is a form of cowardice. It is a throw back to the old days when the War Lords roamed the highways of feudal Japan and any commoner who failed to bow his head would have it cut off.

But in a book which I wrote in 1941 there appears the following paragraph—Last September another United States journalist rather naively explained in his column that the Englishman has a surface gentleness which the inhabitants of the New World were apt to take for softness but that this gentleness hides a real toughness! Toughness alone is surely a very primitive virtue and without it control manners and



urbanity (i.e., the gentleness aforementioned) has little claim as a civilised quality."

Let us hope that the Americans are not misunderstanding the Japanese as thoroughly as they often misunderstand us. For it is even more important to know one's enemy than to know one's ally.

The same American says that the Japanese panic, but whether they panic or not, they have been living for thousands of years in islands where earthquakes and tidal-waves destroy as many as 10 000 people at a time and from their display in December, 1941, one could not accuse them of having altogether lost the use of their wits. The very nature of their islands renders the theory that the Japanese would collapse under bombing completely ridiculous, even apart from the fact that no people yet has collapsed under bombing. It is true that Sir Robert Craigie—our former Ambassador to Tokyo—has recently been holding out to London audiences the pretty picture of the Japanese collapsing under bombs. Unfortunately the reputation of all the diplomats in Tokyo save that of the Australian, Sir John Latham is that of appeasers, and appeasers must practise their art of speaking smooth things on someone. When it can no longer be done on the enemy it is turned on our own people.

Again, to a people so different, do physical expressions mean what they mean to us? The average Englishman still has a vague belief in Oriental impassivity, but all who know the Japanese well agree that they have a habit of giggling on occasions when the average Westerner certainly does not giggle, so that before jumping to conclusions from physical manifestations, it would be well to make detailed investigation.

Perhaps the most interesting study of Japanese character at the present day appears in 'Traveller from Tokyo' by the Englishman, Mr John Morris. His estimate is the more valuable in that its conclusions are those the author obviously dislikes. The very young children are everywhere subjected, he says to an education which has become extremely nationalistic. Others, people of about twenty who received their education in the one period when 'liberal' thought existed in Japan, betray a certain amount of mental confusion, but the group between twenty-five and forty-five contains most of the violent reactionaries. Many of them have received a Western education and are nationalistic almost to the point

of insanity they understand the necessity for a close study of the West but only as a means of destroying it! Mr Morris goes on to say that after the middle forties another striking change is to be found. From that time onwards there is an ever increasing tendency to ignore all foreigners altogether and so the individual Japanese would appear to mirror in his own life the extremes of his country's history which comprises both aggressive militarism and a period of complete seclusion from the rest of the world.

When the period of seclusion was so abruptly terminated by the Americans the Japanese adapted themselves to the exploitation of scientific and other discoveries in a manner nothing short of brilliant and by 1904 when they started their war with Russia they were a people to be reckoned with. Unfortunately although Russia is really an Asiatic power the one sixth of her territory which lies in Europe and contains her capital gave the Japanese the kudos of having defeated a white power and the general European grab for land in China at that period led to our welcoming the growth of Japanese power. Port Arthur had been seized by the Russians a short time before and we suspected Russia's designs in the Far East generally and in Afghanistan in particular. The original treaty of alliance with Japan dates from 1902 and was due to remain in force for five years but after the Russo Japanese war in 1905 we therefore made a defensive alliance with Japan which was renewed in 1911 and continued until the fatal Washington Conference of 1922.

American authors have stated that it was under American pressure that our Japanese Alliance was then given up. This is not true. Sir Robert Borden Prime Minister of Canada strongly urged a break with the Japanese and Australia was hardly less insistent. The Dominions line of argument was that in order to keep the Dominions white we must forbid Japanese immigration and that to do so was hardly compatible with an alliance. The maintenance of White Dominions was certainly essential if only as a balance to the tremendous number of coloured peoples who are our fellow subjects in the British Empire. Whether that policy really did necessitate the abrogation of our Treaty with Japan is very much another question and it certainly should have been realised (as it was by Leo Maxse and a number of other Englishmen) that the ending of the Treaty could only lead to ultimate war with Japan.

At Washington it was agreed that Naval armaments should be limited in the proportion of five-five-three, that is that America and the British Empire should have equal naval strength while Japan was allowed 60 per cent of the naval strength of one of the other two parties to the Treaty. The decision is staggering. The United States of America is a vast land mass with nothing remotely resembling the world wide sea communications of the British Empire. The United States is not as big as Canada alone and has a population of about 130 million as against the 550 million of the British Empire. As one of her politicians John Quincy Adams said America was as a cork-boat in the wake of the British man-of-war —yet America was to have a fleet of equal strength with the Royal Navy!

On the other hand the intelligent gentlemen who drew up the Treaty entirely failed to realise how Japan's position had changed after the last war by her acquisition of the Mandated Islands in the Pacific. To present Japan with a lot of coral reefs and empty islands as a reward for keeping the Pacific quiet during the 1914-18 war may have looked to them like presenting savages with cocoanuts but in reality they had given to Japan a vast area of sea in which the control of her fleet was indisputable and those Pacific lagoons were admirable places in which to gather the naval craft to launch amphibious expeditions on the widespread territories of the British Empire or the Islands under the government of the United States. Moreover the treaty-makers left entirely out of their calculations the coming development of air power and the vast importance the Pacific Islands would then achieve as re-fuelling bases.

It must have been clear to anyone capable of thought that to such a people as the Japanese the sting of being thrown over by the English and allocated an inferior naval strength to that of America all in the same year could only fester over a long period and matters were infinitely worsened in 1924 when America passed an Act against the Immigration of Japanese—not of coloured peoples generally but specifically against Japanese. It is true that they had earlier passed Immigration Laws against the Chinese but the timing and the definite aiming of the 1924 Act were the height of psychological folly. So Japan began the policy of keeping everyone away from her acquired islands. What went on there none might know. From 1904 she had possessed Korea on the mainland of Asia

and the right to maintain armed men to defend her railway in Manchuria. As we shall see in a later section, China, Japan and Russia had squabble after squabble, and fracas after fracas in Manchuria until the September of 1931. The Invergordon Mutiny told Japan that her moment had arrived. The English who had repudiated their alliance with her could no longer rely on the Navy which had ever been the manifestation of their strength. Japan said that Chinese soldiers had blown up the tracks of her Manchurian railway and on this pretext she attacked the Manchurian Army and occupied Mukden, the capital.

This created a fine flutter. Japan was one of the original members of the League of Nations and she had signed the Kellogg Pact, which renounced war as an instrument of national policy. Even in 1930 Japan had seemed to be still toeing the international line and checking her fiery elements, for at the London Conference of 1930 the Fleet strength ratio of 5-5-3 was confirmed. The Japanese Chief of the Naval General Staff violently protested, but was over-ruled by the Government in Tokyo. Thenceforward, the Japanese Navy, like the Japanese Army, was at loggerheads with the Civil Government.

When the Manchuria affair began the Japanese Government under the pressure of world public opinion promised that the Japanese troops would be withdrawn to the railway zone in Manchuria, but the Japanese Army completely ignored their own government. An International Commission was sent out to the Far East. The Lytton Report was at length presented; Geneva threatened sanctions and, according to Lord Strabolgi, it is entirely the fault of Sir John Simon that a strong League policy against Japan was not developed.

Among all the people I know in the political world, I have yet to meet one who has a good word to say of Sir John Simon as Foreign Minister, but Lord Strabolgi's charge simply will not stand, because before the nations of the world could move, not only was the Manchuria affair a *fait accompli* but the Japanese Army was in increasing control of the home government.<sup>1</sup>

*Secret Societies and bands of terrorists whose purpose was to influence Japanese politics, if only by the murder of politi-*

<sup>1</sup> Daily Telegraph April 17th 1914. From Washington. The publication of a number of state department papers "make it clear that even by the act of signing the Kellogg Pact renouncing war the Japanese were already hatching war plans which culminated in the attack on Pearl Harbour."

cians and big business men were no new feature of Japanese life. The famous Black Dragon Society dates from 1901 and on 15th May 1932 the Japanese Prime Minister was murdered. From that date political murder was so frequent in Japan that the period has been named by Mr Hugh Byas 'Government by Assassination'.

A marked feature of the interplay between the Terrorist bands and the political power of the Army was the power of the young Army officer. The Tokyo newspaper *Nichi Nichi* once said that in any organisation the person who actually handles an affair has the right to say what method shall be adopted. Applying this rule to the Army it declared: 'The officers of the middle stratum of the Army who directly attend to the disposal of concrete problems have their own right of talking to their superiors. The great propelling force of a strong army emanates from its middle stratum. The actual central force of the Japanese Army is found there. The question is whether the authorities are able to direct it into a proper channel.'

Well of course the authorities were not able to direct it. From 1931 onwards the Japanese Army was in effective though not in open control of the Government. Therefore nothing that anyone said or did at Geneva could possibly count short of conducting war on Japan. And from what bases?

On the other hand it is immensely important to note that this power and initiative in the hands of junior Japanese officers very largely accounts for their military success and that we cannot hope to overwhelm them unless and until as great powers of decision are left in the hands of our own officers.

The Army's influence on the Civil Government of Japan had far reaching results. The Lytton Report was rejected. Japan left the League of Nations. The Naval Limitations Agreements were scrapped and Japanese policy in China was given entirely into the hands of the Army. On top of all this a national mobilisation measure prepared Japan for the tremendous war she is conducting at present.

1935 saw the end of the Naval Limitations Treaty. 1937 saw the beginning of Japan's war with China and in 1938-9 Japan engaged Russia in full scale warfare on the Soviet Manchurian frontier but her undoubted intention to tackle Russia first and then turn on us was changed by the outbreak of war in

Europe in 1939. A statement by the Tokyo Foreign Office later published in the *Tokyo Gazette* put the matter quite plainly. The new situation created in Europe by German military successes made it imperative for Japan to establish the Greater East Asia Sphere of Common Prosperity by enlarging her programme for the construction of a new order in Eastern Asia. Tokyo therefore lined up with the Axis Powers, sent her troops into Indo China in September 1940 and prepared domestic measures of stern mobilisation.

Even so, in 1940 and 1941 Japan had her moments of worry. An understanding with Russia will be a counter move against Anglo-American efforts to encircle Japan, said Matsuoka in the Diet, and unquestionably Japan until the moment she struck was terrified lest England or America, by sending aid to Russia through Vladivostok, should establish themselves in Russian East Asia and have bases there against her.

than economic the history of the war in the Pacific would have been very different

Although the Japanese Press blew hot and cold and conducted various campaigns during 1941 with the design of confusing the white peoples (which entirely succeeded) at the same time both the Japanese books and Japanese Press were extraordinarily frank. A book published by a Member of the Diet told us exactly what to expect. From a purely technical point of view Japan would occupy Singapore in the first stage of hostilities and then the Netherlands East Indies Hongkong and the Philippines. After that Japan need only stage a defensive war by keeping her own possessions on the one hand and directing her surplus energies towards economic development of East Asia and the South Seas on the other. Japan will thus be able to foster her own power to cope with any exigencies however long hostilities may be prolonged. The last sentence is particularly to be noted.

An English diplomat has since informed me that the Siamese dictator told him the Japanese had said they would be in Singapore in three months. Their calculations were admirably made. And when national mobilisation was proclaimed in Japan on 15th July she had already an enormous reserve of trained men on which to draw and a mass of material in itself alarming. It was believed that apart from her forces in China she had between one and two million veterans in reserve and her naval building had been tremendous. A great part of it was secret but even the information obtainable from *Jane's Fighting Ships* suggested that she was formidable. In a lecture given in Tokyo on 15th July the former Vice Minister of Commerce and Industry said that the materials being consumed in China amounted to only 10 per cent of Japan's total production. He stated that the remaining 90 per cent included guns planes tanks automobiles hides and leather foodstuffs and other stuffs for the defence of the country. The Europeans chose to think that this was bluff although Mr Tolischus the *Times* Correspondent said that they were borne out by the reports of the *Oriental Economist* and further that our Ambassador Sir Robert Craigie believed there to be a two years supply of petrol stored underground near Yokohama alone.

An American journalist who visited the Netherlands East Indies in the April of 1941 states that not only were the

Dutch then planning to wreck their oilfields when the Japanese attacked them, but that simultaneously Japan was buying in California vast amounts of machinery which she could only need to undo the work the Dutch were planning to do

Japan's plans were as clear and as certain as those of Germany. There is no excuse for either our people or the Americans misunderstanding them in any way, or thinking that war could be avoided, and if war cannot be avoided the only sane thing is to choose one's own moment for its precipitation. This England and America with the crassest determination again and again refused to do.

It is easy to see the working of affairs after the event, but it happens that by doing no more than use my elementary intelligence I saw the order of affairs before the event. In 1941 I repeatedly told Viscount Bennett and others that Japan 'will come into this war and will mop up America's Pacific Fleet within a fortnight,' just as in September, 1940, Lord Bennett predicted Japan's move on Singapore through Siam.

So today I am emphatic that Japan is planning yet further very long-term adventure. She does not in the least mind slowly losing men and islands with which she buys time to bring to fruition yet another and possibly even more dramatic stroke.

Nothing will defeat Japan save attack on the Asiatic mainland and attack by white armies which will necessarily be at some disadvantage both through climate and because of supplies and that attack must only be on and through our own territories. To attempt to start military movement in China will only lead to the disaster the Japanese never met—the disaster of being bogged down in China.

## VI

### THE MISJUDGING OF CHINA

ON January 1st 1944, a meeting was held in London to be precise, in the Central Hall, Westminster.

At that meeting there were several Chinese speakers, members of a delegation which arrived here some months after the



return of our four Members of Parliament who visited China. One of those four, Lord Teviot, was also a speaker at the meeting and during an address more remarkable for sentimentality and amiability than for information, he stated, "I went all over China"

I turned swiftly to the man who accompanied me, a man with a widespread twenty years' knowledge of the Far East. Simultaneously, we said, "How CAN he?" but the rest of the thousand or so present (for the hall was by no means full), to all appearances simply lapped it up—just as they ignored the very broad hint given by the Chinese delegates that they expect regained Hongkong to be handed over to them, and a pledge that we shall do so to be given before the Pacific war ends. In fact, one gathered, the sooner the better!

That any man should make the statement, "I went all over China," is simply absurd to the informed, but it is the sort of guff that is handed out to the public and that is misleading them totally.

I was sharply reminded of how a number of prominent people came to me and said in accents of amazement, after an article of mine was published on January 17th, 1943, "I had no idea that Japan had got as much as that in China!"

The article began "Judging from their speeches, many politicians are labouring under the delusion that the Japanese have got little further in China than digging sand-castles round the coast.

"The hard fact is that before the end of 1941, after only four and a half years of warfare against China, Japan had already occupied all the important Chinese cities, had gained control of the great rivers and coastal areas, and the bulk of the Chinese railway system. Indeed, she was in occupation of a great part of China, had stopped China's sea traffic, and set up her own Chinese Government. This Government has now, in January, 1943, declared war upon us, and the B B C informs us that this fact is entirely without importance.

**'SUCH A PRONOUNCEMENT IS QUITE ENOUGH TO MAKE EVERYONE ANXIOUS LEST THE SITUATION IN THE PACIFIC HAS BEEN ENTIRELY MISJUDGED'**

"Before she attacked China, Japan was in possession of Manchukuo and as early as 1936 the Japanese Minister for Overseas Affairs gave tongue to a doctrine which has been

growing in Japan, inspired by the Monroe doctrine of the United States. This suggested that Japan was the obvious leader and protector of a new world group—a group to include China, Indo-China, Siam, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, and the South Sea Islands. The group would be economically self-sufficient, surprisingly rich in rubber and tin and rice-growing areas, and including oil from which the best quality petrol in the world is obtained—high octane petrol, vital for aircraft.

"Well, by the middle of 1942 she had practically the lot."

Yet these hard facts do not prevent the Lord Teviots of this world from going "all over China"!

But a few weeks after the Central Hall meeting another member of the British Parliamentary group which visited China addressed a private meeting in a House of Commons committee room and informed Members of Parliament of the debit side of the Chinese picture; of the Communist armies in North China inimical to Chiang Kai-shek, of the doubt as to how much territory Chiang Kai-shek really controls, and that Chiang Kai-shek is, of course, less than his wife, and Madame is very anti-British. (It is not without relevance that she was educated at an American Methodist college, the type of institution which holds the British Empire synonymous with the devil.)

So much for the two voices of 1944

On July 4th, 1943, an article on China appeared in a London Sunday paper, a rare event. It was written for the sixth anniversary of Japan's war against China, which began on July 7th, 1937, and it was written by the American authoress, Pearl Buck, who is notoriously both pro-Chinese and anti-British, and who has spent too much time urging U.S. audiences that they must not stand with the "doomed" British Empire. Mrs. Buck had to admit that division in China was deepening. For this, she ascribed the blame to us chiefly and to the United States secondarily, although, as we shall see, division has long been the normal condition of China.

Mrs. Buck continued, "The power of bureaucrats is growing. Oppressive elements in the Government are becoming more oppressive. Chungking is a place where free speech is less and less possible and those who want to be free are going to other places."

"Cynicism is killing the spirits and hunger is killing the bodies of those who were once such a strong and purifying political force."

"The Chinese people have no way of choosing their rulers, no way of indicting them when they are corrupt, no way of dismissing them from office. They now can only endure whatever is inflicted upon them.

"Then there is the great problem of the Chinese Army. The division between the Eighth Route Army and the National Army still continues, in spite of the fact that all accept the Generalissimo as their leader.

"There are serious facts which must be faced about the National Army. A third of its men are casualties even without fighting. The Army is being slowly starved for lack of even fresh rice. Malaria and dysenteries and fevers are doing the rest of the damage.

"Yet this is not all. Ever since China was isolated by the loss of Burma and we stopped sending her trucks and parts and petrol, staleness has been creeping over her armies.

"They are tending to become immobile, the men are settling down where they are, and being half-starved and getting little pay; the officers are actually 'going into business'—that is, making what they can out of the local people."

The one misleading phrase in these paragraphs is, "Ever since China was isolated by the loss of Burma." As I shall later show, the process Mrs Buck describes has been going on, at least, since 1939. The important point is that the main statement was made by a very pro-Chinese writer.

Yet the following Wednesday, July 7th, 1943, I attended, at the invitation of the Ministry of Information, an extraordinary performance at the Albert Hall. This was a "Salute to China" meeting, at which Mr Anthony Eden, Mr Attlee, the Chinese Ambassador, and the Canadian, Mr Brockington, all spoke. Apart from the last-named speaker, it was a very dull affair, or would have been but for the behaviour of a man in the next box to mine. I learned later that he was the correspondent of a great news agency just back from Chungking.

The speakers certainly gave the impression that there is a "United China," one great political unit, and Mr Eden talked of Chinese friendship for Britain and Mr Wellington Koo talked about British friendship for China. When the word "friendship" was mentioned by either side the man from Chungking moved forward a little, and it was then perceptible that not only had he celebrated his return but that he had reached that stage of celebration known to the Romans.

*in vino, veritas* Each time he heard the word "friendship," he said audibly and with conviction, "Damn lies! It's all damn lies" And the Press Attache of the Chinese Embassy maintained his bland smile

Now, entirely contrary to official opinion, to mislead the people of this country as to the real state of affairs in an allied country is a very bad and a remarkably dangerous thing It is far more dangerous than to mislead the population as to the situation in enemy countries, a pastime at which some of our politicians seem to have been remarkably successful, deceiving not only the populace but themselves! That fact certainly played its part in the fall of Singapore, and unless the truth is understood in every direction we may find it leading us into disaster after disaster during our return fight

China is a country about as large as Europe if Russia is omitted Its population is far greater and although ardent lovers of China claim for her that she has been "one civilisation" for over four thousand years, the truth is that during great stretches of that period China has been torn by warfare and dissension She has never been a nation in the sense in which that word is understood in the West for she has ever lacked a national sense Because Chinese dialects are mainly related to each other, and her social system is founded on the Confucian system (save when she revolted against it in two periods, about 221 B C and 1911 A D), there are people who talk in terms of Chinese unity as though she were at one time or another a political entity in the Western sense, but she was no more a political entity than, say, mediæval Europe under the Holy Roman Emperor

The Kuomintang—the Chinese Nationalist Party—in May, 1931, issued a Manifesto which said: "The history of Chinese civilisation is more than four thousand years old It reached its zenith in the Han and Tang dynasties, and it suffered gradual decline during the Sing, Yuan and Ming dynasties The collapse of the Chinese Civilisation, already growing senile, was hastened by centuries of misrule Its final debacle came at the end of the Ch'ing dynasty when it was compelled to face the impact of Western civilisation, a civilisation at once virile and aggressive, armed with science and backed up by tremendous industrial resources"

For the benefit of the average Western reader: the Tang dynasty existed from 618 A D to 907 A D, but from 755 A D.

there were rebellions and disturbances, and the decline of the dynasty, so that, on the word of the Chinese National Party China has become increasingly senile ever since 755!

It is fair comment that the noteworthy thing is that China, having so early achieved a common social system and closely related dialect made so little of her start, and never achieved a sense of nationhood. The Confucian system regarded the family as the unit of society and developed ancestor worship, and the Chinese sense of family has never broadened into the sense of being a nation. That is why Chinese officials are, to the English way of thinking, amazingly corrupt. Because they understand that they must look after the well-being of their family, and do not realise that they have a public duty to the nation, Chinese officials of all persuasions habitually pocket public funds. That is one of the tremendous difficulties in the way of arming China. If we give her money and not goods, that money will find its way into some private war chest—Furthermore, all the Chinese sense of family does not prevent parents as a normal thing, from selling their baby children for a few dollars.

For most practical purposes Chinese history starts in 1911, with the rebellion against the Manchu dynasty and the establishment of the Chinese Republic, an "establishment" which meant in fact the handing over of that vast country to rival warlords, brigands, and political factions—tortures above and beyond those of nature who, still unimpeded, floods China's mighty rivers and kills five million of her people at a time in periods of famine.

To give some little idea of the confusion of Chinese politics in the years before the war with Japan started one need only quote Sir Maurice Hewlett in "Forty Years in China." He was of the Diplomatic Service and pro-Chinese as an author. Indeed the books I shall now quote are all by pro-Chinese writers, not because the authors who take a severer view are inaccurate but in order to be *more than fair* to China.

On page 218 of his book, Sir Maurice says that in 1929 "all was not well with the Central Government, and I had many talks with leading officials on the subject. These were ~~not~~ <sup>entirely</sup> personal, but they gave me an insight into the workings of the Chinese official mind. The chief anxieties were caused by disaffection amounting to open rebellion at Hankow and, less hard to detect, the unceasing efforts of Communists to cause trouble in Nanking. The Hankow revolt was ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> firmly

T. V. Soong was accused by those who disliked him, and there were many, of promoting the war, but this was not entirely true. He did not urge his brother-in-law Chiang Kai-shek merely to renew the civil war with a hostile faction, he was advocating the suppression of rank rebellion. No one wanted war. China had already suffered far too much, but unless the newly established Central Government accepted the direct challenge they had received from Wuchang (opposite Hankow, and the seat of the Governor of the Province of Hupei) they were not worthy of the name of a Government. General Chiang knew the issues involved. He had the men, Soong could provide the money, much as he always detested heavy expenditure for military purposes, and they felt they had public feeling behind them. The attitude of the Christian General Feng Yü-hsiang gave cause for anxiety as his movements were puzzling, but in a talk with T.V. we agreed it was unthinkable Feng would go against the Government, and I knew he had no faith in government by massacre. I did not even think he believed in Soviet extreme methods, and felt the activities of Communists were now confined to trying to work through the poorer classes with the assistance of over-zealous students who were disappointed at not getting Government jobs. As a matter of fact, Feng did not again appear very actively in politics and the revolt was suppressed, but the Communist elements continued to work and were soon to take the field as a united army."

A special correspondent of Reuters and the Associated Press of America, Gerald Samson, says in "Warning Lights of Asia," speaking of 1936 in a chapter headed "China's Last Civil War," "But soon after I got back to Shanghai it became clear that another civil war was a distinct possibility and I arranged with the local office of United Press of America to act as their special correspondent. The position when I sailed up the Yangtze was that a self-styled Anti-Japanese Expeditionary Army had been organised by the two south-west provinces and begun to march north, ostensibly to throw the Japanese out of North China. Actually, however, the movement was also strongly anti-Chiang Kai-shek and anti-Nanking. Indeed many wondered whether the anti-Japanese slogan was a blind, especially as many of the troops were equipped with Japanese war supplies and it had been proved that the anti-Japanese demonstrations in Canton were faked

"Moreover, the long-standing personal hatred for the Generalissimo of the Kwangsi Generals Li Tsung-jen and Pai Chung-hsi, two of the leaders of the rebellion," etc., etc

So China had her Quislings long before Norway made the name famous, and how in the face of these facts (although he left China the previous year, 1935) could Sir Maurice Hewlett end his book with —

"Since this was written has come the war with Japan. The great event has occurred which will bind China as one, and from which she will emerge a united country. In previous foreign wars only localities in this huge country have been involved, either the South were opposing the attempts of the foreigner to gain a footing and the North was uninterested, or the North, as in 1900, were deeply involved and the South rather thought a corrupt Court had brought the calamity on themselves. But now East West North and South are all involved and the whole of China is suffering. Nothing could possibly have occurred so calculated to lay the foundation of a strong united China."

True, on the very next page he says

"Yes, I think thoughtful Britons interested in the future of China, and of their own interests in China, should think out the future without indulging in that excess of sentiment to which so many surrender themselves in any questions affecting that fascinating and inherently great country."

But to which effect did our Diplomatic Service inform the Foreign Office?

Whichever way it was, the ultimate responsibility to exercise commonsense and a little human understanding lay with the Foreign Office, for nations simply repeat their own history. China had never stood as an entity against a foreign invader, the reasonable assumption was that she would not do so in the nineteen-thirties.

Let us take an instance of the inevitable repetition of events, caused by the essential character of a people, from our own history.

What public man, and on what occasion said

"A greater contest than that in which we are now engaged the world has never seen, for we are not fighting the battle of our country alone but we are fighting to decide the question whether there shall be any more freedom upon the earth. If we are subdued the great objects of life are vanquished, all

reason for living is at an end; there remains a barren vacant earth from which every good man would beg of Heaven that he might escape. But I have better and brighter hopes . . . I have a boundless faith in the English character; I believe they have more of real religion, more probity, more knowledge and more genuine worth than exists in the whole world besides, they are the guardians of pure Christianity and from this prostituted nation of merchants (as they are in derision called) I believe more heroes will spring up in the hour of danger than all the military nations of ancient and modern Europe have ever produced."

That speech applies, word for word, to the England of 1940, it applies equally to Elizabeth and her 5,000,000 English of 1588, when she and they ranged themselves against Philip of Spain, then lord of half the world, and against the Spanish Inquisition, when as a foreign historian, Leopold von Ranke, said "The fortunes of mankind hung in the balance." It applies to England in 1940 and to England in 1588, but it was written for neither. The words are those of Canon Sydney Smith, of St Paul's Cathedral, written when England alone faced a Europe dominated by Napoleon and when, too, she was threatened with "invasion" before she brought the tyrant to naught and after ten years of warfare freed the peoples of Europe.

"All our past proclaims our future" is true of every mass of people. National character may decay. It does not change.

And so there was but one thing to be expected of the great mass of China in a war with Japan.

The Chinese Revolution of 1911, as we have already noted, led to widespread civic strife in China and Manchuria became a separate province in all but name. Since the Russo-Japanese war in 1904 Japan had had a hold on Manchuria through her possession of the railway, which she was allowed to guard, and that meant she had comparatively strong forces in the province, and so it continued until 1931.

Note now how the possession of views will colour the relating of events. Lord Strabolgi says that in 1931 "a fresh economic blizzard had struck Europe and its effects were felt throughout the world, including Japan and the United States of America. These financial and economic distractions provided Japan with another opportunity for mischief." Japan staged an "incident," occupied Mukden, the capital of Manchuria and



conquered all the territory North and East of the Great Wall of China

Other writers are more specific in their detail Sir John Pratt says on page 217 of "War and Politics in China," "Few people remember, even if they ever realised, the effect produced in every foreign country by the news that the sailors of the fleet at Invergordon had refused to take the ships to sea and that the manœuvres had been abandoned Invergordon was the signal for which the Japanese army in Manchuria had been waiting"

Yes, mutiny in the Royal Navy in 1931, after the performances of Socialist leadership, was an early, but direct step to the loss of Singapore

An English business man who then lived in Bangkok told me how for a week the news of the Navy held the headlines of the Siamese newspapers In his own phrase "The policemen of the world had gone on strike" and the Far East held its breath

Then Japan struck, in defiance of the Kellogg Pact, the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Washington Nine Power Treaty which specifically stated that its signatories would 'respect the sovereignty, the independence and the territorial and administrative integrity of China'

"In the post-Manchurian period as the crisis deepened America continued to withdraw still further into isolation, giving from time to time an extra turn of the screw to her neutrality legislation and contenting herself in the Far East with 'occasional statements for the diplomatic record' (T. A. Bisson, 'American Policy in the Far East, 1931-1940')," writes Sir John Pratt, and America's later conduct I have dealt with in detail elsewhere The American, Mr Stimson, said in 'The Far Eastern Crisis,' "Manchuria was an unknown part of the earth and our people wondered what we had to do with any controversy there at all' The fact appears to be that America looks on China as an admirable ground for her missionaries, her commodities and her expressions of anti-British Empire sentiment And that is all

Russia went through a number of distinct and different phases vis-a-vis China and Japan, phases all exactly mirroring her domestic affairs and attitude at the moment

From 1923 to 1928 Russian revolutionary communism played a large part in Chinese affairs, Borodin joining the Chinese President Dr Sun-Yat-Sen, in Canton in 1923 But by 1931

Russia was fully occupied with her first Five Year Plan and though Manchuria was very much her interest she hardly ventured to protest against Japan's action. By 1935 Russia was aware of the threat both of Germany and of Japan and she drew away from the Chinese Communists towards the Nanking Government but from 1923 to 1937 little Communist governments grew up in China declaring their independence of the Central Government and now in 1944 the Communist armies of North China are at least as much embarrassment to Chiang Kai shek as to the Japanese.

We come then to England's interest in the great shapeless disordered land mass called China.

It really began with the arrival of the East India Company in the eighteenth century and anyone who wants to read the story of how the outer world came to China can do no better than read Mr O M Green's book *The Foreigner in China*. Mr Green formerly editor of the *North China Daily News* is a pro Chinese writer yet what he has to say must make the heart of every Englishman swell with pride. And certainly it is high time the bulk of our people learned something of our connection with China for even to the intelligent it is all remarkably vague while to the rest it is embodied in the one word extraterritoriality which they imagine to cloak a strange and vicious secret.

It is exact truth that a few years ago I was asked to debate at the Leeds University Working Men's Club against an official of the Agricultural Workers Union. That official informed an acquiescent audience that China is a colony of England. When I had recovered from the shock I jumped to my feet and corrected him. Before I was halfway through a voice from the back called out. It must be. We once sent warships there without declaring war!

And it may be asked if our Foreign Policy is dependent on the votes of persons with minds like these how can it be balanced and purposeful—or even sane?

Of course the Foreign Office is influenced remarkably little by voters as to detail but it is influenced by a general atmosphere of. We were wrong to go to that country. We ought to get out and a main cause of our loss of Singapore is our appeasement policy in the Far East which as this book shows continued right into 1942. And in all the detail which it handled the Foreign Office is very heavily to blame.

By the mid-nineteenth century the Parliament at Westminster began everywhere in the East to take over the power and responsibility which had accumulated in the hands of the merchant adventurers of the East India Company, and if we were to trade at all with China, extraterritoriality, which simply gave us the right to try our own nationals in our own and not in Chinese courts, was essential, for in 1842 (when this began) not only did the Chinese legal system differ widely from our own but its methods included torture

In 1842 by the Treaty of Nanking, China ceded Hongkong to us, and there followed the laborious building-up on different terms of the great settlements and Concessions at Shanghai, Tientsin and Hankow "And this above all, says Mr Green, may be said for the British merchants who built up and for many decades dominated them that their administration was never tainted by the slightest suggestion of graft

Dr Sun Yat-Sen had this to say of the British in Hongkong "I began to wonder how foreigners, Englishmen could do such things as they had done, for example with the barren rock of Hongkong within 70 or 80 years while in 4 000 years China had no place like Hongkong When I returned to Honkong I began to study the Government I found that among Government officials corruption was the exception and purity the rule "

Dr Sun Yat-Sen's last sentence, together with all its implications, is full justification for Cecil Rhodes ringing proclamation

**WE ARE THE FIRST RACE IN THE WORLD, AND THE MORE OF THE WORLD WE INHERIT THE BETTER IT IS FOR THE HUMAN RACE '**

For not only do we successfully transplant government officially but our merchants did it in China (and elsewhere) privately and extremely well

And so in an atmosphere of hitherto unknown order, British men and capital, later joined by the Americans the French and others, built up the Concessions into rich and great cities for China, until in this century, British interests in China were estimated at between £200 and £300 millions They comprised two large shipping lines, plying entirely on China's coasts and rivers, three banks with agencies in all her main cities, much land factories and important insurance companies

That was very nice, of course, for us, but it was also pretty good for China •

For instance, Mr Green says "The insurance companies bound by the most rigid laws that Great Britain ever devised for the protection of policy-holders, were a very great boon, the Chinese insurance companies being notoriously erratic in their ways" (a kindly phrase!)

Chinese, as well as British, Americans and Europeans made wealth in these places—the outcome of the persistence of the East India Company in the eighteenth century, and of the activities of the Home Government and many individual merchant adventurers in the nineteenth

Through Hongkong, that British possession which is also a British creation, passed two-thirds of the trade of the Orient, and Hongkong will remain a part of the British Empire for all time

As for extraterritoriality and the Concessions the situation would be Gilbertian if it were not tragic Mr Green says "In May, 1941, Mr Cordell Hull wrote to Dr Quo Tai-chi (then on his way home through America to become Foreign Minister in China) that the United States 'expects when conditions of peace again prevail, to move rapidly towards the relinquishment of certain rights of a special character which this country has long possessed in China . extraterritorial jurisdiction and related practices'

Shortly afterwards Mr Eden made a similar statement in the House of Commons But there was nothing in the report of what he said to show that we were doing more than follow in America's footsteps

Apparently nobody in the Foreign Office thought it worth while to remind Mr Eden of his predecessors (Sir Austen Chamberlain's) spontaneous offer to surrender all the concessions and privileges acquired in China during the nineteenth century, and of the steps taken to fulfil that offer by the return of our Concessions at Hankow, Kiukiang and Chinkiang of Wei-hai-wei and the draft agreement initialled in 1931 for the abolition of British extraterritoriality'

The full story is the measure of the idiocy of our Foreign Secretaries between the wars One and all, *their heads should be on chargers*

At the Washington Conference of 1922 it was agreed that a commission should be sent to China to report on her readiness for the abolition of extraterritoriality The commission found China in a state of raging civil war and naturally decided

that China was not fit to be entrusted with the lives of foreigners!

Mr O M Green, on page 167, continues. "What was surprising was that Sir Austen Chamberlain should have chosen the moment when the Yangtze Valley and all South China were flaming with virulently anti-British Communism, aggravated by Russian agents, who were bent on the downfall of the British Empire, to address notes first to the Washington Conference Powers expressing his disappointment at the non-fulfilment of the intentions of the Conference, next on January 27th, 1927, to the rump Government in Peking and to the Communist Government in Hankow spontaneously offering to return to China all the British Concessions and to cancel all British rights including extraterritoriality

Only three weeks before these two latter Notes were presented a mob of Communist roughs had rushed the British Concession at Hankow. The day before, a handful of British Marines had stood on guard at the entrance of the Concession, they were screamed at, pelted with mud and stones and spat upon. But they were strictly under orders not to fire and, to the bitter disappointment of the Russians, they stood their ground unflinchingly. Next day they were withdrawn, and the Concession was overrun by rioters whom the local government did not make the smallest effort to restrain.

If in such circumstances Sir Austen Chamberlain's note to the Chinese of the 27th January was read by all foreigners in China with amazement, still greater was the consternation when by the agreement of the 19th February between Mr, now Sir Owen O'Malley and Eugene Chen, head of the Hankow junta, the British Concession was handed over to the Chinese lock, stock and barrel. A similar surrender of Kiu-kiang and Chinkiang Concessions followed soon after."

When we handed over Wei-hai-wei to the Kuomintang (Chiang Kai-shek and the Soong family) the Chinese inhabitants did everything they could to avoid their fate. They petitioned us that they might remain under British rule, and when in spite of that they were abandoned, they presented Sir Reginald Johnston, the Commissioner, with the highest honour they could offer—a bowl of pure water, by which the Chinese signified how pure had been British rule.

And then Sir Maurice Hewlett, of the Diplomatic Service, writes in the last chapter of "Forty Years in China," "Why

did the Chinese residents of Wei hai-wei petition the British authorities not to return that tiny Colonial Administration to China? The question is easily answered. They required *justice from oppression fair taxation ordered government*—in fact they wanted to continue to live in peace knowing exactly where they stood. I do not believe there is a country in the world more responsive to good government and equitable treatment than China.

If this is the general mental level of our diplomatic service and Foreign Office then God save us all!

Responsive to good government! But the point to make—the point that counts—is that in 4 000 years they had not been able to provide good government for themselves. What good then did it do either China or the world that we having established it in one or two places in China should withdraw?

The special adviser to the Foreign Office on Far Eastern affairs during this period was Sir John Pratt.

Clearly he has some responsibility for all that happened. What he has to say concerning this period is therefore of importance and he says it with ineffable complacency and at full length in *War and Politics in China*. To the British Government he states belongs the credit of seeing that if order and stability were ever to reign in the Far East an entirely new basis must be formed for the relations between China and the foreign Powers. The new policy began to take shape in a Memorandum addressed to the American Government on May 26th. Sir John then (p 202) quotes a document of the utmost sanctimoniousness in which the United States is reproached for not being super sentimental about China.

After that according to Sir John it became an urgent matter that we should swing the Kuomintang to our side and away from the Russian Communists. In December therefore the British Government that is the Foreign Office thought of (or had offered to them by their advisor) the decision to abandon the Concessions to the Chinese and in January the scenes described by Mr Green took place.

By this move Sir John Pratt says Great Britain had regained her prestige and her position of acknowledged leadership. She now took the lead in dealing with the two major problems of Tariff autonomy and extraterritoriality. Excellent progress was being made with this difficult task when it was violently interrupted by the Japanese attack on Manchuria in

September, 1931. For this catastrophe errors of judgment on the part of the Chinese Government were to some extent responsible.<sup>1</sup>

"The great defect of the Nationalist Movement had always been that it found its chief stimulus in China's external relations. The lowly position which China occupied in the family of nations was in large measure due to the political confusion—the civil wars and misgovernment which had almost come to be regarded as China's normal condition. There was much honest seeking after reform and good government, but this did not inspire the same enthusiasm and pertinacity as the campaign for the abrogation of unequal treaties and for achieving equal national status with the Western Powers. Chinese politicians were wont to make one excuse that administrative reforms were hindered by the encroachments on Chinese Sovereignty, but they deceived no one but themselves. It was, in fact, the old Confucian weakness which prized a fine and noble exterior but cared less for the reality beneath."

The exact meaning of Sir John Pratt's verbiage can be expressed in two sentences. China has never been able to establish stability and order within her own borders and the Nationalist Party had not only not succeeded in doing so but did not even put order and stability first. We knew that, so we decided that the only way through which stability and order could be established in the East, was to hand over to the Nationalist Party the few places in which order and stability had been established!

Is that the conclusion of sanity?

It is difficult to express oneself at all. To express oneself in moderate terms is as impossible as it would be wrong.

The only remotely adequate comment was made in the nineteen-thirties by a man who for many years has sold newspapers at a corner in Oxford Street. One evening as I approached him he was shouting, "Two English Tommies killed in Shanghai—and not a man in this country to tell them as did it to go to hell."

<sup>1</sup> On the next page (206) Sir John Pratt cites the Lytton Report as his authority for a variety of "incidents" between Russians and Chinese and Japanese and Chinese in Manchuria. These, though not the immediate cause of the conflict, suggested its inevitability. Sir John Pratt then severely rates China for embarking on an anti-Japanese policy, "without making even the most rudimentary preparations to meet the violent reaction which it was certain to provoke."

That newsvendor expressed more of truth and of common-sense in one sentence than Sir John Pratt and the entire Foreign Office have managed to express in the space of twenty years. And because not a man in this country told those who did it to go to hell, hell has come to the whole of the Far East.

And note how consistent was the Foreign Office in its *idiocy*! Not only does it throw away what we have created, on the pretence that the Chinese are our equals and can preserve and maintain it, but—having claimed that this action re-established our ascendancy—fourteen years later it allows the world in general to believe that in taking action of that sort we were meekly following the lead of the United States! Moreover when, in 1943, we arranged further cessions to China, we were negotiating with a Government of a small part of China, which may or may not exist after the war, concerning territory over which we have no present control since it is in the hands of the Japanese! The Foreign Office would do well to study Mrs Beeton "First catch your hare—"

What it boils down to is this. for the last generation the main aim of the Foreign Office has been to lessen and belittle the power of England and to acquiesce in and promote the humiliation of her subjects. This last has been an experience without exception. In 1927 Marines were to be spat upon. In 1936, Mr Samson, whose book "*Warning Lights of Asia*," I have already quoted, wrote

"My arrest, imprisonment and expulsion from Japan had become international news. I had no conception of the sensation value attached to my experiences until the boat reached Shanghai and I was mobbed by representatives of the world's Press, who had come to get my personal story

"Facing a battery of cameras and a bombardment of excited questions I explained that I attributed my treatment to the determination of the military that henceforth no foreigner should be permitted to acquire any reliable information on conditions in Japan. The Army had used the powers conferred under martial law in order to get rid of an inconvenient observer

"Copies of Japanese newspapers were pressed into my hand which maliciously accused me of a catalogue of fantastic crimes as a spy and *agent provocateur*. I was said to have been discovered operating a secret radio transmitting set from my room at the Imperial.



been promoted; that means only those with less brains, initiative and vitality. Only so could such guff be put over.

As its devotees could not prove other nations the equal of England in law-giving, purity of administration and the allied arts, they could only rebuke England for using her talent, drive her from the places in which she had done so—and let law and order go to hell

That is the "case history" of the appeasers; the appeasers who are still enthroned in the Foreign Office as my story of the "expert" I heard (and afterwards heartily rebuked) ten days before the fall of Singapore well proves.<sup>1</sup>

And note how while the first fruit of such false theory is injustice the second is downright deception. The war correspondent, James Hodson (far from being a Right Wing Imperialist!) wrote in "War in the Sun" "It's amusing how, in war, we idealise our allies. Most of us think of the Chinese as simple, faithful, most honest, gentle and kindly folk. They aren't always. Similarly, Russia begins to be pictured as a land of freedom and liberty—which is rubbish."

It is not amusing it is desperately dangerous. It leads to reliance being placed where there should be no reliance and it leads to post-war plans being made which cannot succeed but which may be attempted. And the end of that is chaos. Moreover it is unjust to our enemies, and its results in the Far Eastern war is probably gravely to worsen the Japanese treatment of our men who are prisoners in their hands.

Japan has long been suffering from hurt pride where we are concerned and to denounce her as "barbarous" is the surest way of making her so, for how can the Japanese believe us to be sincere when, at the same time as we denounce them, we butter up the Chinese? The Japanese used living Chinese, and, later, living British for bayonet practice. In 1939 an American newspaper correspondent wrote, "Even in Chungking and Chengtu it is fairly common to see groups of roped men being prodded through the streets with bayonets on their way to military headquarters." The prodded men were not prisoners but conscripts for the army of our Chinese Ally.

Eileen Bigland, the pro-Chinese author of "Into China," travelled over the Burma Road to China. Before she had gone far she noticed a lorry which had skidded from the road

<sup>1</sup> See Page 2.

and overturned. In that lorry were badly injured Chinese, and the other Chinese journeying along the road had simply left them to their fate. When Mrs Bigland insisted on helping them, the men in her own vehicle thought her not only mad but extremely tiresome. The author also speaks of Chinese pouring petrol over individuals and setting them alight. What, then, is the difference between the cruelty of the Japanese and the cruelty of the Chinese? The true answer, of course, is that all Asiatics have an indifference to suffering that strikes horror only in the Christian and chiefly the British heart.

The Japanese sell their daughters into prostitution so do the Chinese, and anyone who wants to know the details of slavery in China, particularly child slavery (for as I previously stated, children are sold for a dollar or two) is referred to the book on slavery by Lady Simon, the first wife of the present Viscount Simon.

In the House of Lords in May 1925 Lord Davidson the former Archbishop of Canterbury said 'The revelations about China and the degree and character of Chinese slavery were to me startling in the highest degree. I had occasion to talk over the matter with an eminent Chinaman who is in this country. I drew a very dark picture of what China appeared to be. It appeared so dark to me that I hardly liked to put it to him as being true, but he said it was not nearly dark enough.'

Four hundred million people have not changed their national character and habits in the last fifteen years! Our people are being grossly misled both as to what the Chinese are and what the Chinese have done, and the Chinese, who are the most skilful propagandists in the world, are making the most of it.

Some months ago a British Regular Officer of standing, who has an intimate knowledge of China in the last few years, was home. He came to me in as near panic as his character and code permit and he told me how the British Army Intelligence in the East was well aware that effective large-scale fighting was over by the end of 1938. "They talk of Chinese resistance!" he said. As—put it 'by 1939 the Chinese had settled nicely down to a normal peaceful life of wartime.' But mind they are the cleverest propagandists on earth. They would persuade anyone of anything even you. And the money collected for them in other countries is spent by the

Chinese on propaganda in those countries—surprised though the promoters of the charities would be to know how they are being used. And that is more true than ever now *for there exists no means of transporting goods into China other than a very few strictly military air consignments*.

Mr Hallett Abend is a contributor to the *New York Times*, *The Saturday Evening Post* and *The American Mercury*, that is he is a contributor to the most reputable and intelligent newspapers in America. At various times *before 1940* he wrote

The people of the United States watching the long-drawn agony of the struggle in China must base their opinions mainly upon what they read in the newspapers and to a lesser degree upon magazine articles. How then are they to judge between the true and the false? Which sources of information are accurate and unprejudicial if any and which are to be ignored as either subsidised or biased?

The Chinese are masterly in their handling of propaganda—and are also utterly unscrupulous. The American public will still remember with aversion and horror the hundreds of ghastly pictures of the victims of bombings in Shanghai that were circulated all over the world as evidence of Japanese wanton atrocities. But the truth of the matter is that most of those photographs showed the results of Chinese bombs which because of the panic or ineptitude of Chinese airmen fell in the International Settlement or French Concession at Shanghai.

The pictures of the results of Japanese aerial bombings at Nantao the old native city of Shanghai were authentic but some of them were posed. Earlier photographs were taken after Chinese airplanes had bombed Nanking Road and the Palace Hotel and killed and wounded upward of 2 000 people (most of them Chinese) at the junction of Avenue Edward VII and Thibet Road and had killed and wounded nearly 1 000 more civilians when the Sincere and Wing On department stores on Nanking Road were wrecked by an Italian-made bomb dropped from a Chinese airplane from a height of about 12 000 feet.

Weeks later several very small Japanese aerial bombs landed in the foreign controlled areas of Shanghai but the combined casualty lists of those accidental affairs were less than forty killed.

I hold no brief for Japan's air force nor for the detestable callousness with which the Japanese bomb great crowded

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Chinese cities, but merely cite these cases to show the Chinese cleverness, and the Japanese clumsiness, at propaganda. Even during the height of world-wide censure of Japan for showering death from the air upon thousands of helpless civilians, the Japanese did not once point out that for several years General Chiang Kai-shek's own airplanes had ruthlessly bombed Chinese cities and towns. This bombing began at Foochow, when the Nineteenth Route Army, the heroes of the fighting against the Japanese at Shanghai early in 1932, mutinied and rebelled. It was continued for several years through half a dozen provinces while Chiang Kai-shek harried the Chinese Communist armies.

Again Mr. Abend wrote

"Amazing roles are being played by most of those Chinese who have, for varying and usually obscure reasons, accepted high positions in the various puppet regimes that have been organised in the areas occupied by the Japanese Army

"To foreign governments, to foreign interests in China, and also to foreigners living in China, the most astonishing and most alarming of the activities of these officials is their almost incessant propaganda against the neutral American and European Powers

"Experiencing daily, as they must, blatant evidence of Japan's intention to exploit China solely for the greater glory and greater wealth of the Japanese Empire, these puppet officials nevertheless continuously attack what are grouped as 'the treaty Powers,' and reiterate unceasingly their declarations that Japan is China's friendly liberator and that Japan alone can 'save China from the selfish and greedy exploitation plan of the Western nations'

"Since every word and deed of these puppet officials is either suggested by or at least approved in advance by the Japanese, these violent anti-foreign utterances are considered as necessarily having Tokyo's approval, and foreign diplomatic and military officials and observers in China are deeply concerned over the fact that one of Japan's basic policies seems to be to develop a rabid anti-Western prejudice in the Chinese masses"

\* \* \*

"But there is another side to this propaganda newspaper question. In Nanking, in Hangchow and in Hankow there

are now Chinese-language newspapers (under absolute Japanese control, of course), that are carrying on bitter and vindictive anti-British campaigns, and even now and then carry editorials that openly advocate 'throwing all the white men out of Asia' "

Of "Free China," that is the comparatively small and remote part of China under the control of Chiang Kai-shek, Mr Abend said—still 'be it remembered, more than four years ago—

"As a matter of fact, all's not beer and skittles in interior China. Corruption and nepotism and defeatism have not been overcome, despite the New Life Movement, General Chiang Kai-shek's lengthy lectures on 'spiritual mobilisation' and desperate efforts to enhance the morale of the public and of officialdom

'Money is scarce, comforts are few and luxuries are lacking in Chungking. Many of the bureaucrats sigh audibly for the lost fleshpots and 'easy pickings' of the old days in Nanking "

\* \* \* \*

"Already much cotton cloth is reaching the far interior from Japanese mills at Shanghai, Tsingtao and Tientsin. Chinese-owned factories in Shanghai are already 'secretly' shipping cotton cloth into 'free China'—after arranging a pay-off with the Japanese. This also helps to give Japan the beginning of dividends on her conquest and tightens her economic grip on the country "

\* \* \* \*

"Authentic and complete news from 'free China' is becoming more and more difficult to transmit to the outside world. There is a strict and not too prompt or intelligent censorship of all telegrams and wireless messages sent from Chungking and all other cities in the far interior, and the outgoing mails are also subject to careful scrutiny. Official bigotry, suspiciousness, subterfuge and obscurantism are increasing stiflingly, and occasionally high-handed measures are adopted against foreign correspondents who try to tell the whole truth to their newspapers

"In the late spring of 1939 there was one particularly notable case. A certain American correspondent sent out a too-revealing news account of the actual condition of China's air force. The American was not arrested, but his valuable

Chinese assistant was thrown into military prison on a charge of espionage. All of the American's files and office records were confiscated, and military guards were put into his office and into his home. Then an order was issued for the expulsion from 'free China' of this American correspondent. Diplomatic intervention brought a suspension of the deportation order, and the American correspondent was officially told he could remain in China only if he revealed all his news sources. This he refused to do and there the case was deadlocked at the beginning of June. It will probably be settled amicably and without publicity, but the Chinese consider they have 'given a healthy warning' to all foreign correspondents and that the official strangling of unfavourable news will be easier in the future than it has been in the past.

When there were battles between the Japanese and Chinese from 1939 onwards the Japanese naturally gave them large publicity at home and the Chinese gave them all the publicity possible because of their propaganda value in the British Empire and the United States.

In 'Retreat in the East' the war correspondent Mr Gallagher, makes the very sensible suggestion

'The other war that had been in progress for five years between Japan and China may have contributed to the under-estimation of Japan's fighting capabilities. Japan had not been able to defeat pathetically under-armed China in all those years, how then could she hope to fight a successful war against the ABCD line? How could she launch an attack against Australian, British, Chinese, and Dutch interests when she still had that vast fighting flank in China? And, supposing the United States came into the war, how much more remote became Japan's chances of success!

"There is no doubt, in my opinion that Japan's war with China petered out into gigantic, realistic manoeuvres after 1939, when the Japanese had occupied Nanking and Canton, gained control over Shanghai, forced the Chinese into the remote hinterland, and became masters of China's coastline.'

But none of these men, whether soldier or journalist, and in spite of their first-hand knowledge of the East and the fact that their resultant views were far more realist than the official view, seems to me even to have glimpsed the truth. Yet it is obvious enough, even on a day's reading of the history of China, and for the first time. It is the old, old story of 'can't

see the wood for the trees of men possessing the facts but being unable to draw the one possible logical deduction. Above all it is that enemy of the Western powers the European mind.

From 1938 Japan had at least as firm a hold on China as most Chinese Governments have had throughout the centuries (From 1942 Japan has lorded it in China over far more than any Chinese Government has had for she holds Hongkong and Shanghai among the booty). Why should Japan set out to give China a law and order she has never possessed? Law and order is a Western concept an English attribute and fetish. Conquest in Asia has never meant the settlement and safe guarding of the inhabitants of the conquered territory. Why should it suddenly include those ideas in the twentieth century?

History gives us no reason neither does the study of human nature. The conclusion is opposed to all experience. It proceeds only from that absurdity the doctrine of the equality and similarity of nations.

Even the most ardent believers in the awakening of a national spirit in all China have to express their doubts yet the wishful thinking that is the disease of the twentieth century has them deeply infected. As the Greeks said To be in love with the impossible is a disease of the soul.

By the end of 1938 Japan had all she wanted in China. *She really could* well afford to let Time work for her thenceforward.

But both British and American official quarters were thoroughly fooled.

In 1942 those representing official America were still writing of 1940 in these terms. Only China shut out from effective use of the sea inhibited by lack of industrial power fighting a defensive war with pathetic persistent gallantry blocked Japan's career of conquest in Asia.

On February 15th 1942 Mr Churchill said in the House of Commons. This should be a comfort and a reassurance. We can now measure the wonderful strength of the Chinese people who under Generalissimo Chiang Kai shek have singlehanded fought this hideous Japanese aggressor for four and a half years and left him baffled and dismayed. This they have done although they were a people whose whole philosophy for many ages was opposed to war and warlike arts and who in their agony were caught ill armed ill supplied with munitions and hopelessly outmatched in the air.



If that was Mr Churchill's view of the situation between China and Japan no wonder he had said a few minutes before, I shall frankly state to you that I did not believe it was in the interests of Japan to burst into war both upon the British Empire and the United States. I thought it would be a very irrational act.

The complete misjudgment of the Sino-Japanese war by the British and American Governments was an important contributory cause to the loss of Singapore. In plain English they were completely fooled.

That is bad enough but what is totally reprehensible is that they are keeping their people fooled now.

We can only say to America that even in 1940 China was blocking precisely nothing in Asia and to Mr Churchill that Japan launched the greatest amphibious expeditions of all time when she simultaneously launched attacks on Pearl Harbour the Philippines Malaya and Hongkong so that if that is what she can do when she is left baffled and dismayed God indeed help us if she ever chooses to start anything when she is feeling bright and cheery.

And now will those people who imagine that to defeat Japan we have only to polish off Hitler re-open the Burma Road and use our shipping to carry arms to China who will do the rest please wake up.

As this book is being printed in England a book by Leland Stowe is being published in New York. Its title is 'They Shall Not Sleep' and in May 1944 the American magazine 'Coronet' published a synopsis of the book from which the following statements are taken.

Mr Stowe travelled to China over the Burma Road. Two American officers were bringing a United States Navy supply truck along the road. Just in front of them a truck was crashed into head on by a Chinese army conveyance which was speeding on the wrong side of the highway. Out leapt a dozen Chinese soldiers. They hauled the driver out of the truck, knocked him down and began kicking him fiercely. Then the two Americans, so outnumbered that they dared not intervene, saw one soldier grab a rock-crusher hammer from beside the road and bludgeon the brains out of their victim's head. For more than three years this kind of gangsterdom had flourished virtually without control along the middle section of the Burma Road.

Concerning smuggling on the Burma Road when it was open—smuggling to the tremendous detriment of any warfare against Japan—Mr Stowe has this to say “The Burma Road was the greatest racket in the Far East. Yet unless all the tonnage that could be transported over the Burma Road *was* transported over it—unless its abuses were eradicated—the Chinese armies could never stage a large-scale offensive against the Japanese. For these reasons the Burma Road was of simply inestimable importance to the Allied cause, so I had plunged myself into a fact-finding expedition which soon proved to be the most discouraging and depressing experience I had had anywhere since the second World War began’

Typical of what Mr Stowe discovered was the incident of the spare radios for the P-40 Tomahawks which two of the three American Volunteer Group Squadrons were to fly from Kunming. When the crates were opened by an Allied officer they were found to be stuffed with scent and toilet articles. ‘Such things bring a very fancy price in Kunming or Chungking. The radios had been removed *en route*’

Concerning American Lease-Lend to China Mr Stowe found that the Chinese had handed to America ‘lists of machinery and machine-tools to furnish plants which do not exist. It would take two or three years to put some of these plants into operation. But when they were ready China still wouldn’t have enough engineers to direct them. She would still have to train her own men to operate them. There’s no dodging the fact that a great many of these Lend-Lease bids have nothing to do with resistance to Japan—not while the issue will be decided. The Chinese are simply asking us to underwrite the industrialisation of China’

Of China in general Mr Stowe says ‘I came to China with a typically American romantic attitude towards the Orient, without any faint conception of the oppressive poverty and squalor which eats the flesh of China’s ‘one-fifth of humanity, and with only a vague idea of the great complexity of the Orient’s problems and Oriental character’

Mr Stowe talks of “China’s feudalism” and says ‘We do not think of China as a Totalitarian State, yet the Kuomintang regime is a one party dictatorship’ He tells how Chiang Kai shek gave a liberal proposal his personal and absolute veto, and he states that ‘those public-spirited Chinese who had a pronounced will for democracy were too seldom to be

found among the most successful politicians of the Kuomintang Party

Only now on his return to America and free from the censorship of Chungking can Mr Stowe tell the truth and show how the Burma Road can never be used effectively save under the strictest British or American armed supervision

But does anyone in his senses envisage the Chinese fighting the Japanese under the armed supervision of England or the USA?

Yet short of that idea what is the point of struggling to reopen the Burma Road a piece of damnable nonsense on which we are throwing away precious British lives at this moment In the words of *The Daily Telegraph* at the end of June 1944 the Allied purpose is not so much the re-conquest of Burma as the re conquest of an overland route into China

No condemnation is strong enough for this piece of stupendous idiocy this flying in the face of every fact The British Empire has one prior and rightful interest and one rightful interest only The re conquest first of our Far Eastern Empire

We can accomplish this in one way only by a series of amphibious expeditions to regain Burma and Malaya From Malaya—at long last—we must cross the frontier into Siam

That done we can consider how to deal with the rest of Asia

## VII

### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNITED STATES

THEODORE ROOSEVELT wrote on the 22nd of December 1910 to William Howard Taft who succeeded him as President of the United States —

Our vital interest is to keep the Japanese out of our country and at the same time to preserve the goodwill of Japan The vital interest of the Japanese on the other hand is in Manchuria and Korea It is therefore peculiarly our interest not to take any steps as regards Manchuria which will give the Japanese cause to feel with or

without reason, that we are hostile to them, or a menace—in however slight a degree—to their interests. I utterly disbelieve in the policy of bluff, in national or international no less than in private affairs, or in any violation of the old frontier maxim 'Never draw unless you mean to shoot.' I do not believe in our taking any position anywhere unless we can make good; and as regards Manchuria, if the Japanese choose to follow a course of conduct to which we are adverse, we cannot stop it unless we are prepared to go to war, and a successful war about Manchuria would require a fleet as good as *that of England plus an army as good as that of Germany.*"

Thirty-one years later, when the imminence of war with Japan was beyond denial and Japan an infinitely stronger power than in 1910, the United States army was for all practical purposes non-existent and her Pacific Fleet was anchored most conveniently for the enemy in Pearl Harbour, as if it were specially arranged to receive the maximum damage from bombs, while U S aircraft at the neighbouring aerodrome lay wing-tip to wing-tip to receive a like fate, in spite of all the lessons of the European war which had then been raging for over two years

This was America's first contribution to a war which in the just estimate of an American President would have taken, even thirty years earlier, "a fleet as good as that of England plus an army as good as that of Germany"

So what had American Presidents been thinking of in the meantime?

They, like the misguided (to be very kind about it) leaders of the other democracies, had been thinking in terms of vote-catching, and their voters are comprised of people of whom an American, Mr Dwight Whitney, says in "Who Are The Americans?" that in the "practical work-a-day sense of the word, practically half the Americans would have to be counted as 'foreigners' in their own country" (Page 17)

Early in this century, the influx of Southern and Eastern Europeans to America was enormous. These people fled from Europe to get out of her wars and troubles and they are Isolationists by every instinct. How unassimilated into one nation they still are is not at all realised in England. An Englishman learns with a shock that in New York alone nearly two million people get their news from foreign-language newspapers

It was a population so composed that would not support the League of Nations, and the American, Mr. Stimson, in the early nineteen-thirties met the same fate as President Wilson. Up to 1933, Mr. Stimson, for the American Government, took a strong verbal line against Japan but, in the words of a Japanese writer, "a Democratic Government, with Mr. Roosevelt in the principal role at the White House, succeeded the administration of Mr. Hoover and adopted a negative policy of non-interference with Japan."

After the Japanese annexation of Manchukuo on 10th January 1933, President Hoover asked the Senate to give him power to forbid American merchants to export arms to countries between whom disputes had arisen.

On 27th February, 1933 Sir John Simon stated in the House of Commons that His Majesty's Government had decided not to permit the export to either China or Japan of any articles mentioned in the Arms Export Prohibition Order of 1931. The prohibition was to take immediate effect and to remain in force until some international understanding had been reached.

America then refused to co-operate, and so too France, Czecho-Slovakia and other countries. On 13th March, England raised the ban.

Voluntary intervention of any sort in foreign affairs is well-nigh impossible to any American Government, depending, as it does, on a population so constituted. Mr. Philip Wylie, the American author of a book on the American people named "Generation of Vipers" (published in 1942 in the American continent only) says of millions of his fellow-countrymen after a description of their origin: "We should not forget that while they paid loud lip-service to our ideals at Ellis Island, they came here in the first place to get. One reason for the fearsome default of democratic government is to be found in these persons and their descendants, who must now number half the populace, and their identification still with their basic reason for being here. . . . The picture of the average Eastern American, in June, 1942, should not ever be forgotten again if society is to go on being mechanised. He screamed to assure himself of a minimum of 50 miles weekly of mobility for which he would not have to be held accountable at all. Some two-thirds of the car-owners of America solemnly swore that fifty miles a week was not mobility enough for their private cars under

any circumstances and that they must have fluid for seventy-five, or a hundred or unlimited miles. This occurred at a time when the nation was stripping rubber from its tanks and substituting iron, at the cost of speed and practicability. It did not matter that they were risking a sell-out of everything mankind has stood for, since his start, including even the American automobile."

Now, in May, 1944, an American contributor to a London Sunday paper describes the same attitude obtaining, and the Archbishop of York while on a visit to America warns that it is far from certain that America will co-operate in foreign affairs after this war.

Thus it comes that Sir John Pratt, advisor to the Foreign Office on Far Eastern affairs from 1925 to 1938 was constrained to write, in the middle of 1943, in *The Quarterly* published in America by the Institute of Pacific Relations and concerning the closing of the Burma Road in July, 1940 "The ultimate safety of America was equally at stake, but Isolationist sentiment was so strong and so charged with suspicion that in Britain's hour of greatest danger the Administration had no option but to demonstrate that American policy was framed without regard to relations between Britain and Japan."

But it is the authoritative American source 'How War Came to America', that gives the conclusive details of America's lag in the later Pacific events.

There the two journalists in closest touch with the White House state (page 135) that after the collapse of France the Governor of the French Colony of Indo-China asked the United States for arms. Had Indo-China fought Japan, much in the Far East might have been saved, but America could do nothing.

"The War Department (page 47) could muster only 68,000 troops, without mechanical equipment, and with few modern planes, for the most extensive manoeuvres ever held."

When the Prime Minister and the President met in the *Augusta* and H M S *Prince of Wales* (page 14) "Churchill wished to meet the issue squarely. He asked the President to join in an ultimate declaration to Japan. The President temporised. On December 7th, 1941 (page 16) the President may also have reflected on the different turn events would have taken had it been possible to accept Churchill's counsel. The initiative might not have been so completely in Japanese hands."

So Mr. Churchill broadcast to the world that did Japan attack the United States we would "spring to the republic's aid within the hour," but even after that (page 136) American policy *vis-a-vis* Japan "could never be brought to meet in the realistic unity of purpose desired by the British, the Dutch and the Australians"

Between Isolationist sentiment and anti-British feeling there is no wide gulf and when we consider what verbal attacks on the British Empire have been delivered by most prominent Americans since Japan forced America into this war, we shall not be surprised at America's shilly-shallying before Pearl Harbour

In 1943 Mr Wendell Willkie announced to the wide world that they were not fighting for the British Empire, whereupon *The Sydney Morning Herald* retorted "Well, we are"

In March, as but another of many instances, Mr Hamilton Fish, a member of the United States Congress, blandly declared that he was in favour of openly asking England "for the outright possession of all islands from Bermuda to South America for use as strategic air and naval bases" Mr 'Ham' Fish, until 1942, was Chairman of the Opposition in the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee, and has represented some 249,589 inhabitants of New York ever since 1919 They re-elected him on 4th November, 1942, although on the day before, 3rd November, he asserted in a public speech that he stood for India's complete independence, and said "I am not in favour of sacrificing a single American life in India while it is within the British Empire"

Early in 1943, Senator Nye stated in the pages of the New York paper *P M*, referring to the Empire "I feel its size and spread is rather a threat to the peace of mind of the world It invites animosity and denies advantages or even opportunities to others"

As such are the feelings of many Americans even now, an American explanation of an otherwise inexplicable puzzle becomes comprehensible.

Many must have wondered why, when all American stations in the Pacific were warned to be on guard five weeks before Pearl Harbour, that disaster could still occur The explanation comes on Page 10 of "How War Came to America": "the President assumed, along with 132,000,000 other Americans, that war would break first in Siam, the East Indies, or the Malay Peninsula"

In other words, they were rather thinking in terms of a ringside seat to watch the Japanese attack on the British Empire than in terms of a threat to themselves, and as long as their minds were wrongly centred no warnings were of avail.

Very different is the America of 1940 from the America of 1900<sup>1</sup>

In "War and Politics in China," Sir John Pratt describes how he climbed the Peak at Hongkong one day at the end of April, 1898 and "to the beauty of the scene was added an element of deep historic interest, for stretched out in two long lines of grey in the beautiful land-locked harbour of Hongkong lay the whole American Asiatic Squadron waiting for war with Spain to break out. The story is now well-known how Theodore Roosevelt, afterwards President of the United States and then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, finding himself left in charge of the Navy Department for one afternoon, had sent peremptory orders to Admiral Dewey to take the whole squadron, with a full supply of coal to Hongkong in order to launch offensive operations against the Philippines immediately war broke out."

But in 1911 the Americans, when they knew of imminent danger from Japan, did not send their fleet to Hongkong, or to show itself in the China Sea or to Singapore or even to Manila. Had they done so, Japan's miraculously wide-spread attacks must have been disorganised and the American fleet would not have been put out of action in harbour—bombed to uselessness for many months literally before it had even a suspicion that there were Japanese 'planes about!

No, instead of sending it to Hongkong the Americans tried to hide their Pacific Fleet away in the Hawaiian Islands—and the phrase 'hide away' is not unjust, for the nearest Japanese territory to Pearl Harbour was the Marshall Islands, more than 2000 miles away, Japan itself being a far greater distance.

During the Spanish-American war there occurred the famous incident to commemorate which "The Ends of the Earth Club" was founded. From 1815 the supremacy of England and her Navy was firmly established, and behind that sure shield not only the British Dominions grew up in freedom and security, but the United States as well, for as long as Canada was in British hands, and the seas were patrolled by the Royal Navy, none could attack the United States without the goodwill of England and when during the Spanish-



American war for the Philippine Islands the American fleet proceeded to attack Manila, Admiral Chichester, present with a British force, moved H M S *Immortalité* between the American fleet and a German squadron which had no friendly intention

In 1900 England still guarded America and policed the Pacific, but a few years later a vague idea began to grow, unformulated, an idea which found its mathematical expression in the Washington Treaty of Limitation of Naval Armaments which was signed on 6th February, 1922 and which fixed the Fleets of the British Empire and of the United States at an equal ratio of 15 super-dreadnoughts each. That idea was that as it was to America's interest to maintain order in the Pacific she could be largely trusted to do so.

In view of what happened in 1914-18 alone, this was more than ridiculous.

On 24th January, 1939 Mr Harry Woodring Secretary for War, broadcasting from Washington urged the United States to be prepared to resist a sudden undeclared war. He recalled that the Americans on the Western Front during the war (1914-18) fought with British and French munitions and aeroplanes and that on the Meuse and Argonne only four of 2 700 field guns were manufactured in the United States. In spite of the burdens we placed on the wartime productivity of our harassed Allies during the war we did not engage in battle with the American Field Army until seventeen months after the declaration of a state of war. Why then expect anything of her in the Pacific?

But America continues to perform the miracle of believing that she won the war and has a right to criticise us—who save her every time—on all and every occasion.

On 10th January 1943 I answered in a *Sunday Dispatch* article a typical attack on us published in America. I wrote—

"The *New York Times* has never been unfriendly or unfair to this country and yet recently one of its contributors was allowed to state, in a review of a book about Singapore, that the author 'was silenced by the British for his outspoken criticisms of the bungling defence of Malaya and flew to the Netherlands Indies while the Dutch were still staging their heroic resistance'. That is the American summing-up of what happened in the Far East and is apparently to be accepted by them for all time—the bung-

ling British in Malaya' and the 'heroic Dutch resistance in Java.'"

The facts are that the weak "and bungling" British fought for ten weeks in Malaya and the Straits Settlements and the Dutch fought for eight days in Java.

We were caught unawares by an attack on Malaya by the Japanese across the land frontier from Siam at the moment of the attack on Pearl Harbour. The Dutch had ten weeks—the ten weeks the British held out in Malaya—in which to prepare to defend the island of Java.

Some people in America seem to think that Malaya (so "feebly" defended by the British!) is a vast country and that Java (the scene of the heroic Dutch resistance) is a small island. In fact, Java is comparable in size to Malaya and has a population of about 42 000 000, that is eight times that of Malaya. There were 170 000 men under arms in Java in 1942 and British Army reinforcements for Java were diverted to Rangoon only when Java fell.

Yet the Americans still think today that the ten weeks' defence of Malaya was a "bungle" and the eight days' defence of Java was an "heroic resistance."

What a perfect commentary both on Britain's information services to the United States and on American general knowledge.

Mr Sumner Welles in his book, "The Time for Decision" (published in America) gives exactly the same false implication. He says on page 296, "The infiltration of Japan into Thailand, accomplished by treachery and by corruption, later terminated in British disaster, the capture of Burma and Malaya and Singapore. Notwithstanding the stout resistance of the Dutch forces in the Netherlands East Indies, these were likewise soon added to Japan's spoils."

Mr. Cecil Brown, the U.S. radio commentator who got himself banned by the British in Singapore and by the Dutch in the Netherlands East Indies, says in his book, "Suez to Singapore," writing in Singapore on October 28th, 1941, "The Dutch know there is a war going on. They are prepared for it and they mean business," and he quotes a colleague as saying, "The Dutch East Indies are the best bet for Americans in the Far East," though he was honest enough to record on January 29th, 1942, when actually in the N.E.I. that, "The Dutch aren't getting on with the British. The British aren't getting on with

the Americans and the Americans aren't getting on with either the Dutch or the British" But his chapter heading is "The Fighting Dutch"

The fact is that the Dutch Empire is not big enough or significant enough to arouse American envy and petulance

One war correspondent has since furiously remarked that if we had held Singapore Island longer we should have given the Dutch "time to prepare"

We gave them ten weeks

Was no one to give us "time to prepare"?

Well, to be quite honest, a good many people *had* thought that *something* might help, if and when trouble blew up in the Pacific They thought that the American Navy might hold the Japanese—and how on earth the people who permitted the disaster of Pearl Harbour dare criticise us the heavens themselves might be forgiven for not knowing!

The two primary causes of the disaster in Malaya were these Few ever anticipated so total a collapse of France that Indo-China would simply be handed over to the Japanese and the back-door to Singapore opened, and few anticipated the U S Fleet entirely out of action—though there were those of us who had roundly asserted the utter folly of ever relying on anything save our own strength

**WILL OUR GOVERNMENT KINDLY OBSERVE AND GO ON OBSERVING THROUGH ALL THE FASHIONABLE TWADDLE OF THE MOMENT THAT IN FUTURE WE MUST RELY UPON THE ROYAL NAVY, THE ROYAL AIR FORCE AND HIS MAJESTY'S ARMY, AND ON THEM ALONE**

A short time after that article appeared in 1943 Sir John Pratt's book 'War and Politics in China' was published, and on page 149 he elaborated the same theme

The Government, however, still laboured under the delusion that the defence of British interests could, in part at any rate, be entrusted to our allies, and when the Admiralty under Sir John Fisher, decided to concentrate naval strength in areas close to the North Sea—a thoroughly sound conception the wisdom of which was demonstrated when war broke out in 1914—the Mediterranean was abandoned to the French navy and the British battleships were withdrawn from the Far East This was the first step downward in the primrose path that led the British

people to the belief that no special exertions were necessary to defend the British Empire. The slogan in later years was that by joining the League of Nations we had placed the Pax Britannica in commission and when at length it was realised to what dangerous lengths disarmament had been carried it was almost too late for it was *only after the collapse of France that the consequences of entrusting to other people areas vital for our own defence were revealed*. The nation has now recovered its ancient courage and determination but there are signs that *this canker in our way of thinking has not yet been quite eradicated* there is still some disposition to believe that America or Russia or China will win the war for us.

It is indeed a remarkable mind that has such a disposition after our experiences of 1940-41!

America could not help Indo-China to dispute Japanese possession of that territory.

America would not form with us a common front in the Pacific in 1941.

America would not use her fleet and after five weeks of grave and ample warning let it be shattered as it lay at anchor. That fact is so fantastic that the marvellous stories of those partially informed on Pacific affairs of how Alice flew specially from South America to play Delilah to an American Samson for the benefit of the Japanese plan or the denunciation of drink and the alleged part it played at Pearl Harbour by American mothers' temperance associations are pale by comparison.

America paid dearly in immediate casualties apart from the crippling loss of power and the stigma on her reputation. Quoting U.S. figures Lord Strabolgi in Singapore and After says that 91 naval officers and 2 638 ratings were killed and 656 were wounded in the attack on Pearl Harbour. The shore garrison and air force lost about 1 700 the army casualties were 168 killed 223 wounded and 26 missing. President Roosevelt in his broadcast to America on 22nd February 1942 gave the civilian casualties as 2 340 killed and 946 wounded.

In April 1943 a British officer with an extensive knowledge of the Far East came home for a brief period on a special mission. Even then he found official circles apathetic in certain important directions and knowing that I had devoted several of my weekly *Sunday Dispatch* articles to the impor-

tance of the Pacific War, he obtained an introduction and came to see me. He came to lunch just before one p.m. and stayed until after five p.m., a record even for one of my guests.

During our conversation I asserted that had Japan realised the extent of her triumph at Pearl Harbour, she must also have realised that there was nothing in the world to stop her from blocking the Panama Canal, bombing and bombarding the west coast of the United States at will and at the very least, smashing what transport plans the Republic had made.

He interrupted me with the statement 'I can tell you definitely that the Japanese did know just how much they had, done. We have proof of that.'

"Then," I answered, "the fact that they took no further direct steps against the United States can only mean that they do not consider her an enemy to be feared. They think that if only they can liquidate the British Empire they can polish off the United States at any time—possibly simply by long-term pressure."

Not a muscle of his face changed. The United States not an enemy to be feared, he repeated. Few people would say that today but you say it as if it were a reasonable supposition. Would you tell me what reasons you have for saying it?

I gave them—for twenty-five minutes without a pause, and only when I stopped did his poker-face relax.

He looked at me appraisingly then he said, "This is very remarkable. One night in Tokyo in 1938 two Japanese Admirals attempted to convince me that America is not an enemy to be feared. They gave me exactly the reasons that you have given now."

Unquestionably the Japanese backed their opinion in 1941 and events proved them right.

Their one miscalculation was in not being ready to attack immediately after the collapse of France. In other words, even the Japanese had not recognised the real rottenness of France, though there was a pointer for all the world in the mere fact that France did not declare war on Germany in 1939 until six hours after the declaration of war by England. It was an event of all significance, yet an event practically ignored.

The Japanese, of course, used the eighteen months of 1940-41 to the greatest advantage, concentrating troops in Indo-

China consolidating their agreements with Siam which opened the land frontiers of Malaya, and amassing material for the most remarkable attacks in history, the attacks over thousands of miles on Pearl Harbour, and over other thousands on the Philippines and the far less remarkable but practically simultaneous attacks on Malaya and Hongkong.

On her estimate of America Japan decided that to attack the Republic at the same time as the British Empire would give little extra trouble while at the same time adding enormously to her prestige. She was right all the way.

As stepping-stones or advanced bases in the Pacific the United States had in their order of progression towards the Far East Midway Island Wake Island and Guam at distances of something between a thousand to fifteen hundred miles each from each. After the denunciation of the Washington Treaty by Japan in 1935 the Americans were free to fortify these islands to the limit of their ingenuity. The United States Naval Staff asked for the money to fortify them at any rate to an extent they thought adequate but Congress made a great ado about it and at the end of 1941 the work was not finished. The Japanese made a simultaneous attack on these three islands and captured the first two in a fortnight.

The American campaign in the Philippines has been lauded to the skies. The American wireless stations declaimed about victories which in the American tongue was sheer ballyhoo—in plain English the grossest misrepresentation.<sup>1</sup> Within four months the British Press had caught the infection and was talking its wild nonsense about the marvellous way in which the Americans had 'held' the Philippines and British and American critics alike belauded the way in which the Americans had led and trained the Filipinos to fight for their own land while the British had neglected to do so with the Malays and the Burmese.

And apparently it occurred to no one until I pointed it out in a newspaper article in 1942 that we held Malta not for four months but for years—Malta the George Cross Island who as her own proud inscription says, joined the British Empire freely and for love. We held Malta for years reinforcing

<sup>1</sup> *The Straits Budget* published in Singapore on Dec 30th 1941 printed from a Manila Radio broadcast by Sayre High Commissioner of the Philippines. Help is coming—help of such magnitude that it will drive the Japanese from the Philippines.

her by convoy after convoy under the very noses of the enemy and within a few miles of their coasts, and never even thought of it until General MacArthur was hysterically applauded for sitting on the Philippines for a few weeks, while the United States did not even attempt to reinforce him, though the enemy coasts—and bases—were thousands of miles away. And Quislings of standing including Vargas and Aquinaldo were found in the Philippines.

The Philippines consist of 7,000 islands, an area of 114,400 square miles. Stationed at Manila, the capital, at the outbreak of war were two American cruisers and some destroyers and torpedo boats. In 1934 the U S Congress passed an Act which was to give the Philippines full independence in 1946<sup>1</sup>. From 1934, therefore, the Filipino Army should have been training and growing. But at the outbreak of war there were some, 20,000 American troops on the islands, as green as those sent to Tunisia and of the same standard of behaviour. The mixed bag of mountain tribe scouts and a hundred-thousand reservists who had done a few weeks' training, together with 20,000 regular Filipino troops brought the total of the defence forces to round about 150,000.

The attack on the Philippines began the day after Pearl Harbour. Despite all that had happened in Europe and all that had happened at Pearl Harbour, the U S 'planes in the Philippines were left wing-tip to wing-tip on the ground, spread out for the Japanese bombers just like the fleet at Pearl Harbour. And they met exactly the same fate.

Indeed, the Americans were still repeating that performance months later. Mr Cecil Brown states in "Suez to Singapore," that when Darwin, Australia, was raided by the Japanese on Saturday, February 21st, 1942, "many American aircraft were destroyed on the ground, both fighters and bombers," and on Thursday, March 5th, when the Japanese raided Broome, on the west coast, "Two PB2Y's and three Flying Fortresses and fifteen Kittyhawk fighters were destroyed on the ground. They caught us totally unprepared."

The American journalist, Clark Lee, records in "They Call it Pacific" the conversation he had with a group of men immediately after the destruction of the U. S. air power in the Philippines. He says:

<sup>1</sup> They are now going to give "full independence" but retain bases there,

"They were Americans belonging to the 200th New Mexico National Guard, an anti-aircraft regiment of coast artillery which came to the Philippines in September. Their guns were 37-millimetre rapid-fire weapons, 'America's answer to the dive-bomber'."

"In the darkness we introduced ourselves. The sergeant was Joe Smith, the corporal Gene Davis. There were Gene Davis's brother Dwayne, and Paul Womack, Leon Beasley, Charlie James, Sam Buse, Lieutenant Frank Forni and Lieutenant J. A. Oden, Jr."

"We were at Clark Field yesterday," they said.

"For goodness sake, tell me about it. I heard the Japs knocked off a few of our 'planes'."

"They said 'Yes, and that ain't all. It was lunch-time, and our officers had gone to eat. We had been listening to the radio and knew the war was on, but we didn't think the Japs were going to hit us. We were sitting by our guns and chewing the fat."

"A bunch of 'planes started to come over, with the sun shining on their silver wings."

"We said 'Look at them U. S. Navy 'planes. Goodness me, but ain't they purty?'"

"Somebody was counting. 'Fifty-one, fifty-two, fifty-three—My God,—they ain't ours!'"

"Just to verify the story they called over their mate who had been counting."

"Then the bombs whistled down. One of our guns was hit squarely. We started to shoot right away, without orders, but I don't believe we hit many of those bombers. We think they were four-engined bombers. They lit the hangars and set them on fire, and a lot of our 'planes."

"Just as the bombers cleared off the fighters dived down on us. Somebody counted eighty-six of them. They really came low. They dived up and down the line of 'planes and set fire to most of them with bullets. They were firing 20-millimetre cannon, too. (They gave me a few of the empty 20-millimetre cases, for souvenirs.)"

"The 'planes came straight at our guns and when they passed by the pilots would shake their fists. When they got too close we'd duck into our foxholes and then shoot at them going away."

"We shot down six of them altogether."



" 'Lots of our pilots and crews were killed running for their 'planes. The bombs hit the barracks and mess, too, and killed a lot there

" 'We heard about three hundred and fifty were killed or wounded

" 'We figure we lost twenty-four bombers out of thirty-six, and all of our fighters except a half-dozen or so

" 'There's not much left of our Air Force '

" Later I found out more about how our Air Force was destroyed, but I never established to my entire satisfaction *why* it was on the ground when the Japs came over, more than ten hours after we had received word of the Pearl Harbour attack.

\* \* \* \*

" In any case, the disaster at Clark Field was another chapter in the tragic story that shows we were not, as an army, navy or nation, prepared militarily and psychologically for the shocks of war. Even individuals had a hard time realising it when they came into combat for the first time '

The anti-aircraft guns on Corregidor had a maximum range of 10 000 feet. The Jap bombers flew serenely above their bursting shells, quite out of harm's way, and then dropped their bombs as they pleased. The American Army map was that put out by the Standard Oil Company to swell its own advertisement, and everything else in the Philippines " Campaign " was like unto it.

These are facts from eye-witnesses, but anyone who wishes to learn how really bad were the things that happened in the Philippines has only to read " They Were Expendable," written by four U S personnel on the spot.

In July, 1941, General MacArthur was sent to the Philippines, in view of the troubled Asiatic situation, in order to re-organise their defences.

Six months later, in a period of only six weeks, the Japanese landed from bases more than fifteen hundred miles away 200,000 men with heavy tanks and artillery, and stores, and all the necessary ground-staffs for their air force.

And the high-light of the American " campaign," in the teeth of the experience of Pearl Harbour less than three weeks before, was to declare Manila an open city on 27th December, 1941, to remove its defences and light it brilliantly.

I well remember my own reaction to the declaration, but any child of two could have told General MacArthur what would happen. The Japanese immediately and successively bombed the city good and proper. Yet a week later, on 2nd January, 1942 the Japanese occupied Manila without being resisted either by Americans or by Filipinos, and the American Air Department in Washington issued the amazing statement that "As it had previously been declared an open city, no close defence within the environs of the city was possible. The loss of Manila, while serious, has not lessened resistance to the Japanese attacks."

This statement was stark nonsense, for a built-up city is the one place in which a modern army can be halted, and the abandonment of Manila was a tremendous lessening of resistance to Japan.

As for declaring the capital an open city in the first place it was either utter fatuity or pusillanimity.

Well before the end of December, 1941, American warships had withdrawn from the Philippines to Sourabaya and as America never attempted to relieve the garrison which withdrew to the Bataan peninsula the result was a foregone conclusion.

A year later on the anniversary of the fall of Corregidor, General MacArthur issued an Order of the day in which he said "Until we lift our flag from its dust we stand unredeemed before mankind."

On page 95 of "Singapore and After" Lord Strabolgi makes the just comment "So important was it to deny the use of the Straits of Malacca to Japanese shipping and vessels of war that the defence of Malaya might have been given a higher priority. The destruction of the naval base led to an outcry in America that this loss would prolong the war for another year. American troops and munitions could have been rushed to Malaya in time to take part in the defence. The Singapore base had to be defended on the mainland and not on the island."

Indeed, in Singapore a riddle was constantly asked in the late January of 1942. It was "Where is the American Fleet?" And the answer "Oh, it hasn't been released yet from its contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer."

An American journalist records that a few weeks later in Java a brother American told him the U.S. ships were in future to be made with glass bottoms, so that their admirals could review the fleet.

When the defence of Java began at the end of February, nearly three months after Pearl Harbour, some American aircraft took part, though not what the Dutch expected. There were no American naval reinforcements and early in February the American Admiral Hart (who had withdrawn from Manila to Sourabaya) resigned and the Dutch Vice-Admiral Helfrich took over the combined fleets.

The record of American officers in the first months of the Pacific war was one of court-martial and resignation, yet their fellow-countrymen have launched everything from strong criticism to vituperation at England because of her Pacific record (which is certainly better than the U S 's) and have insisted that England's failure is due to her "class system," her "feudalism," her aristocracy.

As America had neither aristocracy nor an ordered social system to blame, it would be most interesting to know to what she ascribes the more than comparable failure of her own Government and Services in 1941 and the early months of 1942!

Even Mr Herbert Morrison was constrained to retort to American critics as late as 6th October, 1943

"In the whole vast Far Eastern theatre, taking British, Australian and Indian troops, the Empire's contribution in man-power is comparable to America's own.

"Then there are Burma and Malaya, Tientsin and Hong-kong.

"The military record in Burma and Malaya is an unhappy one. Not that we ourselves accept many of the criticisms of our unpreparedness. We know that the failure to train and arm the native peoples, far from being a sign of imperialist sloth and negligence, was an expression of the best Wilsonian principles. After the last war, enlightened people laid it down that the use of Colonial populations as troops was a reactionary and reprehensible thing.

"Our intention was to defend Burma and Malaya with our own military resources. But when the pinch came they, or the vast bulk of them, were occupied elsewhere. We regard it as a duty to ourselves, as well as to the people who were in our care, to set matters fully to rights the moment we can."

The exact truth is that for months after her gross inaction at Pearl Harbour, America remained inactive in the Pacific, while England, heavily engaged in Africa and with her hands full --

Europe fought in Malaya and in Burma and rushed over to America barrage balloons anti aircraft guns and patrol vessels.

After this period of almost complete inertia America characteristically embarked on the large sounding excursion of bombing Tokyo on 18th April 1942

I have talked to foreign diplomats who were imprisoned in Tokyo at that time awaiting repatriation. They tell me that the raid though a very small affair had a certain slight propaganda effect as the first occasion on which bombs had fallen on the Japanese homeland. Unfortunately however the Americans hit a hospital with the result that the charges of barbarism in this war have not been all on one side! <sup>1</sup>

The Englishman John Morris in his book *Traveller From Tokyo* records that he was in the Guiza the main thoroughfare of Tokyo when the raid began. He states that as the American bombers came into view flying so low that their marks were visible. There was not the slightest sign of panic. The police halted the traffic but nobody made any attempt to take shelter the general sentiment was one of bewildered interest everybody wondering what was going to happen next.

But the interesting thing about the Tokyo raid was not to be most easily observed in Tokyo. For those with reasonably good memories it was to be seen in the world's Press.

First the Japanese Government announced that they executed the American airmen they had captured. Then the American Government stated that no American airmen had fallen into the hands of the Japanese. All were accounted for.

A year later on 18th April 1943 when complacency was more than usually evident in the United States the U.S. Government suddenly published a bitter denunciation of Japan for beheading some of the American airmen who bombed Tokyo. No reference was made to the previous statement that no American had fallen into Japanese hands and that all were accounted for.

That this was not simply bad work by the American information services is proved by an article which appeared in *The World's Press News* (London) on 18th February 1943. It began

<sup>1</sup> *Tokyo Record* speaks of the Japanese stating that American soldiers in the Philippines machine gunned Japanese women and children at the beginning of the war.

"An extraordinary picture of censorship conditions in Australia is given by Noel Monks, war correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, just returned after twelve months attached to General MacArthur's Command in the South-West Pacific

"In addition to the Australian censorship, overseas correspondents had to contend with an equally drastic military censorship imposed by General MacArthur, who himself told us 'I am responsible to Washington for anything that goes out of here, and I am not going to let anything out that will cause trouble'

"MacArthur's military censorship is the worst I have ever experienced in any war I have covered, said Monks. 'A glaring example was when General MacArthur paid his first visit to New Guinea, after having been seven months in Australia, and correspondents copy was held up until MacArthur himself had read the despatches. Several British correspondents including myself withdrew their stories as a protest against such delay as general security was not involved in any way. Walter Lucas, of the *Daily Express*, withdrew his story after it had been censored and he found that it had been altered on the orders of one of the censors. Lucas's lead was General MacArthur has visited New Guinea. This was crossed out and written in was 'General MacArthur has been seen at the front in New Guinea'. The fact was General MacArthur never actually visited the front in New Guinea on that occasion."

In September, 1943 "Tunisian Battle" was published in London. It was written by John D'Arcy Dawson, war correspondent of the Kemsley Newspapers. On page 66, the author says

"Just before the end of December I had returned to Algiers for a few days to see Brigadier-General McClure (a regular soldier in the U.S. Army) who was in command of all Allied Public Relations services in North Africa. I had found that all criticism even though constructive, had been cut out of my copy and I wished to get a clear ruling on the subject. I was with General McClure for some hours and we discussed the matter fully. Our talk was not very satisfactory as when I put the question 'What criticism is allowed?' General McClure replied

that no criticism which would make people at home feel unhappy would be allowed

"Against such an argument I was speechless, for unless people at home realise that there is something to be corrected the faults are very often prolonged. Public criticism at least ventilates a grievance, and if it is well-founded action is taken."

I included the substance of these paragraphs in my *Sunday Dispatch* article of 17th October, together with the author's statements (which I had long known to be true and wished to publish) of what happened at Longstop Hill and Tobessa. The result was a pretty little pother behind the scenes, originating in American quarters.

Now it is the purpose of this book to discover why we lost Singapore in order to ensure that we recover our Far Eastern Empire with the greatest speed and efficiency.

Nothing is more clear than that our reliance on America was a main contributory cause of the fall of Singapore. On that a question of great importance follows. Will reliance on America in the Pacific war prove as delusive in the future as it has in the past?

This is why the fact that American censorship tampers with truth (and particularly when elections loom ahead) is of all-importance to us.

"Unless people at home realise that there is something to be corrected the faults are very often prolonged," says Mr D'Arcy Dawson.

"I have often wondered whether the ordinary citizen in a free country realises how immense is the influence of skilful propaganda. So constantly had I read that the people of Britain were rapidly approaching semi-starvation that in the end I had almost come to believe it," says the author of "Traveller From Tokyo."

Most forcefully—and most ironically!—of all, writes Frederick Moore, an American who was for fourteen years Adviser to the Japanese Government. In "With Japan's Leaders" he says on page 28: "The censorship of news, glorification of their troops, justification for aggression, distortion of facts and falsification of reports by their writers and editors under Army menace gave even intelligent Japanese a distorted view of what was going on. I told many of those who saw me things about their army that they did not know."

Well!!

We have seen how the censorship operates under American "Army menace" in different parts of the world, and as for "glorification of their troops," it pleased the *New York Daily News* to remark at the end of the Tunisian campaign, "Now that Patton, Eisenhower and Montgomery have saved Egypt for Britain, what about Alaska?" The *New York Daily News* either preferred not to publish it or did not know that, whereas America's casualties throughout the African campaign were less than 20,000, Africa in this war has cost the British Empire casualties amounting to 220,000.

It is true, of course, that just before the Tunisian campaign was concluded and the *New York Daily News* enjoyed its typical day out, the *New York Times* wrote, on 13th April, 1943: "Though the end of the campaign may at last be near, its history is not without sobering aspects. Pretty clearly, the real work has been done by the Eighth Army and the Desert Air Force."

But Mr. Dwight Whitney in "Who Are The Americans?" says on page 52:

"The leaders in *The New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*, though frequently quoted from in the London Press and in the news releases of the B.B.C. are in fact never read in nine-tenths of America, and very rarely read even in New York."

The *New York Daily News*, on the other hand, is affiliated to the powerful and very anti-British *Chicago Tribune*, one of the few newspapers in the United States to boast of a circulation of round about 1,000,000 and the lunatic distortions of the *Daily News* are rarely, if ever, checked by the British Information Services whose main characteristic is pernicious anæmia.

Then, too, British official bolstering and buttering-up of the United States has gone very far. After the stink raised by the five American Senators, officials of the Lend-Lease Administration stated that the first "American" aid to Russia consisted of 1,500 heavy British trucks. "For psychological reasons" it was desirable that Russia should feel that the United States was helping her, but the United States had no trucks available, so it was arranged that we should send them in the name of the United States.

There has also been some odd picking of facts for presentation to the world by the members of the British War Cabinet,

and the upshot of all this is to mislead the United States public by giving them a very inflated idea of what they have done; which inflation swells their unreasoning complacency about the future, and the further consequence is to mislead the British public as to what we may expect of the United States

Late in 1943 Mr. Roosevelt said at a Press Conference that he had only that morning "discovered an amazing fact that should be made headline news", it was that the amount of beef and veal provided by Australia for American troops was equal to the amount supplied by the United States to Europe.

Some time before that a member of the United States Congress demanded that Australia should pay for the airfields made for Allied Forces in Australia. It was from Australia, not from Washington that the correction came. "Australia is paying for them."

On 17th January, 1943, I had to write "Even in terms of men whether in numbers or in experience, the Pacific is not Washington's question more than ours. The reverse is true. Much of our heavy fighting has gone almost unnoticed. The land campaign in Papua, for example, has been fought almost exclusively by the Australians veterans who would have been invaluable in grand-scale warfare and who are wasted, in every sense of the word, in malarial swamps. Our own casualties may be gathered from the fact that some 15 000 Japanese perished there."

At the end of April 1943, one still had to point out that, on the word of Australian authorities, Australia was providing eighty per cent of the land forces in the Pacific area, and in February 1944 Australians had to protest that the American public apparently thought that American forces had freed New Guinea whereas it was the work of Australian infantry.

On the same day it was pointed out that for America to mobilise her man-power to the same extent as Australia, proportionately to her population, America would have to have 16 000,000 men under arms—an achievement of which she does not even remotely dream. Later in 1944, Mr. Nelson Johnson, United States Minister in Australia, stated that far fewer United States troops had been killed in the entire South-West Pacific operations than at the Anzio beachhead in Italy. As for New Zealand, by April, 1942, nearly ten per cent of her population—not of her man-power, but of her population—was under arms. Thirty-three per cent. of the male population of



Canada of military age are in the armed forces, forty-four per cent of the men of military age in the British provinces of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and forty one per cent in New Brunswick enlisted. Even so seventy per cent of the casualties of the Libyan campaign were borne by the British Isles.

Yet in the autumn of 1943 in the United States General Marshall had to tell a joint session of the Military Affairs Committee of the Senate and House of Representatives that if they stepped in and interrupted a steady flow of men into the armed forces they would hurt us more than the Germans or the Japanese. He had to speak vigorously to the Committees who were hearing statements on Senator Wheeler's Bill which sought to prohibit the calling up of fathers of Military age.

General Marshall expresses surprise at the agitation which had developed over the call on fathers of military age. I am puzzled by the reaction, he said. If fathers were not drafted it seems to me all we could do is reduce our programme and cut our strategy.

That in the United States fatherhood should be held to incapacitate a man is most odd. It has not had that effect elsewhere.

It is also odd that United States troops should have to be so much better fed than other fighters. To this Australia ascribed something of her shortage of beef early in 1944 when in England there was newspaper talk of cutting the already meagre meat rations.

All this has happened and the United States has jibbed alike at heavy war taxation and at compulsory national service.

Concerning American production which has been so belauded there are already various statements in this book but the following facts are not untypical.

In August 1943 I visited the London Docks. What I saw and heard there of America's mass-produced ships was one thing what the newspaper headlines stated was very much another. In view of my undertaking before I was allowed to visit the Docks I could say nothing but in 1944 a speech was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* from Seattle concerning the much vaunted Liberty ships and on 20th February 1944 a London Sunday newspaper said

A Liberty ship laden with troops recently split open while tied up at an Alaskan wharf according to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* quoted by Reuter yesterday.

"The newspaper added that 10 other ships which had been converted into troop-carriers were held up in this area as the army and the navy refused to use them

"Rear-Admiral Emory Land, U S Maritime Commission chairman, stated last month that 'locked-up stresses' due to welding had caused some Liberty ships to crack and others to break completely in half " (20 2 44)

And in 1944 the wartime policy of a number of the South American Republic for the first time began to be opposed to that of the United States began to be more friendly to the Axis-minded Argentine and less identified with the United States

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and it is a real danger to the peace of the world that Americans in general expect to be able to say and do as they please (and our wartime censorship prevents us knowing *what* they say and do), yet they are bewildered and outraged at the voicing of the mildest truth about themselves.

My *Dispatch* articles putting certain Americans firmly in their place were widely reproduced in the United States Press. From all parts of the Home Country, and from all the Dominions they brought fervent plaudits and asseverations that we would all fight *anyone* who attempted to interfere with the Empire. From America they brought many thousands of words of amazed and pained unbelief, assuring me that America has done everything in this war, and generally congratulating the Almighty on having been able to produce Americans. After a stern reply, it was most interesting to see how far they climbed down and it is a fact that the whole of this island has a grudge against the present Government for appearing to "knuckle-under" to the United States.

there is no peace and equality between the nations where all is difference

We lost Singapore because our politicians are old and they still look on Europe as the centre of civilisation. Therefore the whole strategy of the war has been wrongly conceived particularly in its defensive and non aggressive nature in all parts of the world. The very title Minister of Defence is indicative of fundamental weakness.

We lost Singapore because we supplied Russia

On Monday December 22nd 1941 Sir Robert Brooke Popham held a general meeting in Singapore for civic leaders and representatives of the various racial groups as well as the press. At the beginning of his statement he said "Let us admit that retirement might not have been necessary had we had larger forces and more military equipment. You all know that a lot of aeroplanes and other equipment has gone to Russia. Without that we don't know what would have happened in Russia. Maybe this equipment turned the scale. Some of it might have come here."

We lost Singapore because it has been the policy of our politicians to wait on or for Allies thus indicating their fundamental lack of knowledge of the Empire in general and the English people in particular.

Mr Churchill put the matter into words on two occasions. On 29th January 1942 speaking in the House of Commons he said "As I said on Tuesday we have never had the power and we never could have had the power to fight Germany Italy and Japan singlehanded at the same time. We therefore had to watch the march of events with an anxiety which increased with the growth of the Japanese concentrations but at the same time was offset by the continuous approach of the United States ever nearer to the confines of the war. It must not be supposed that endless repeated consultations and discussions were not held by the Staffs by the Defence Committee by Ministers and that Staff Conferences were not held at Singapore."

But endless consultations and discussions were not what was needed. Two or three decisions would have outweighed them all. And to say that the British Empire never could have had the power to deal with three countries at once is ridiculous while to say we have never had the power is questionable.

Mr Churchill continued 'All this went on but when all was said and done there was the danger and the means of meeting it had yet to be found. Ought we not in that interval to have considered the question which the House must ask itself—I want to answer the case quite fairly—whether in view of that menace apart from minor precautions many of which were taken and some of which were not we ought not to have reduced our aid in munitions to Russia?'

Mr Churchill continued to say that they had not made that reduction in spite of the repeated requests from Sir Robert Brooke-Popham. That was the most disastrous decision ever made and again it was based on the belief that to maintain a foreign army was better than to safeguard our own Empire. It was based on a totally false assessment of what the British Empire really is and what its people given free rein for their initiative really can do. For years our politicians have steadily belittled the character of the English people. Every election we have had for many years has been based on an appeal to the lowest and feeblest instincts of the electorate and in a book which I wrote in 1941 I included a chapter called 'The Misrepresentation of the British'. One of its paragraphs read 'It will be immediately obvious from the few foregoing words and from the reader's own experience' that the politicians and officials of 1939 were unlikely to be in close touch with the feelings of the British people. Even so the mistakes they made in word and deed are well nigh beyond belief, the most flagrant of all being the statement made by the Ministers at the time of Norway to distinguished individuals with a right to their confidence and by certain persons in the Ministry of Information to whoever took their fancy that our people wouldn't stand bombing. If ever there were just and righteous cause for political murder it lay in that foul traducing of the salt of the earth!'

At a speech at a luncheon given by the London County Council at the County Hall after the review of the Civil Defence Services in Hyde Park on 14th July 1941 Mr Winston Churchill expressed himself at one with these politicians. His statement was greeted by a great roar of laughter throughout the hall when he said 'Indeed before the war when the imagination painted pictures of what might happen in the great air raids on our cities plans were made to move the Government to move all the great controlling services which are

Had the one Intelligence Officer aware of the realities of the situation either been given his head or at least been allowed to state his case and produce the evidence, and had our troops moved into Thailand in consequence, given all the other factors against it, Singapore might still have fallen, but it would not have fallen so quickly. At the very least the Japanese time-table would have been disrupted and a real stand could have been made in Burma and the Dutch Indies. Japan's career of conquest must have been less far and wide. Above all, there is a general consensus of opinion that, had the Malayan campaign taken longer some civilian in Singapore would have managed to break through the official crust and deal effectively with the brutal realities of the situation. As it was, many civilians did all they could, but they had not time to force their way.

For the stories of the whisky-swilling planters we have largely to thank the *Daily Express* correspondent and as for denunciations of dances in Singapore 200 people would not have been killed in London had they not been dancing in the Café de Paris at the height of the blitz. Was what was magnificent in London despicable in Singapore? Motor-cars were requisitioned in Singapore, and there was a nine o'clock curfew for the last two weeks, so the dancing could not have been on any scale.

That some men left before they should is true. It is equally true that the authorities were sending home from Singapore on the long voyage round the Cape ships that were empty save for passengers, and that Singapore civilians did all they could to force those responsible to load up those ships with rubber. It is a fact that the one man who really knew something of Malaya and Thailand was a civilian until this war began. It is a fact that it was a civilian who was responsible for Sir Shenton Thomas's most famous order—though unhappily it came too late—'Seniority is of no account.' That statement was included on the urging of one Singapore civilian and another was the only one to attain the position of broadcaster trusted by the local people. A week before the fall of Singapore—a week before—it looked as if he were going to take the A R P situation completely in hand over the heads of the local authorities.

Yes, longer time was what was really needed, the time we could have won in Thailand, and the 500 fighter planes which could not possibly have meant the difference between Russia's

centred in London and disperse them about the country side and also it was always considered a very great danger that a sudden wave of panic might send millions of people crowding into the country side along the roads

Well might Londoners roar with laughter Who was it called the English a nation of lions led by asses?

Just as they constantly belittled the people so the politicians entirely failed to appreciate the Empire and it is they who equally with the Foreign Office are responsible for the loss of Singapore and the length of this war Who then is the Foreign Office? According to Lord Lloyd it is nine times out of ten some young man in an attic In the particular case of Singapore it narrows down to the Foreign Secretary and to those who were dealing with Siam and accepting the word of Sir Josiah Crosby that he had Luang Phibul and his Cabinet in his pocket without using the most ordinary commonsense and further—and worse—suppressing in the most high handed fashion a man who could and can prove them wrong

Indeed over elaboration of direction not enough freedom of action for the men on the spot far too little co operation between the three Services and the prevalence of Jacks in office who take any statement which runs counter to their preconceived views as a personal affront instead of considering it in the light of what is best for the country all contributed to the loss of Singapore

It is particularly striking to any impartial investigator that while the soldiers were contemptuous of the civilians in Malaya the civilians were equally contemptuous of the soldiers and certainly there was no common view of the Asiatics with whom they were dealing Many of the civilians accused the soldiers of having a North West Frontier mentality and on the authority of Viscount Wwll the soldiers were so unaware of the realities of the situation that a short time before the war broke out they were asking for transfer from Malaya to some more active theatre of war

Indeed our men had to be completely out of touch with the real situation or the East Surreys and the Indians would not have been caught by the Japanese when they were heedlessly partaking of breakfast which is what actually occurred and if the situation was unreal to them it comes back and can only come back to the ridiculous acceptance by the politicians of the statement that Thailand was safe and solid for us

Had the one Intelligence Officer aware of the realities of the situation either been given his head or at least been allowed to state his case and produce the evidence, and had our troops moved into Thailand in consequence, given all the other factors against it, Singapore might still have fallen, but it would not have fallen so quickly. At the very least the Japanese time-table would have been disrupted and a real stand could have been made in Burma and the Dutch Indies. Japan's career of conquest must have been less far and wide. Above all, there is a general consensus of opinion that, had the Malayan campaign taken longer, some civilian in Singapore would have managed to break through the official crust and deal effectively with the brutal realities of the situation. As it was, many civilians did all they could, but they had not time to force their way.

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survival or defeat though, even if they did, they went to the wrong destination

Outstanding among the civilians in Singapore was the editor of the *Straits Times*, whose name is Seabridge. He is recorded as having made a particularly shrewd comment on an incident which occurred in the early months of 1941—a comment which shows up yet once again what a curse publicity is in the twentieth century. Mr Seabridge said, "Brooke-Popham gave an interview to American newspaper men and said that if Japan touches Borneo, Indo-China, or the Dutch East Indies, they touch Britain. Then two days later Brooke-Popham said he had been misquoted, that he had not mentioned Indo-China. Japan immediately eased up her pressure on the Dutch East Indies and began her pressure on Indo-China. This was a clear indication that she could go ahead in Indo-China."

Probably the most maddening thing of all is that our authorities are not content to work ruin themselves, but seem determined on a conspiracy of silence concerning those men who have done better. Some time ago, a Staff Officer with a great knowledge of China said to me, "Go into the Ministry of Information Far East Department one day, and suddenly mention the two names I have just mentioned to you, and see what happens. Those two fellows were certain that war was coming, and no one would listen to them, so they cleared out and organised their own guerrilla forces, and have done great work, but there is dead silence about them."

About those two men there continues to be dead silence and about many hundreds of others who have fully maintained the traditions of the British Empire and of England at her greatest.

Just occasionally a story creeps out, as in 1943 one emerged from Burma, and Mr. Marsland Gander wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*, "Out of the rain one day in Burma appeared the dripping figure of a man seeking shelter. As he dried his sodden uniform we slowly learned his story. Formerly employed by a business house in Calcutta, he was now a Captain in a mysterious Force and had been working for three months among pro-British Arakanese Moslems, organising them into guerrilla bands against the Burmese who had been armed and encouraged by the enemy. Later I learned that he was one of many British officers who following the example of Lawrence in Arabia banished themselves to the wilderness to enlist the support of friendly tribes."

It is here to be noted that while the Burmese have probably no objection to our return there is great friction between them and the Indians so that to use Indian troops for the re-conquest of Burma is a mistake of magnitude.

The story of the Pacific Islands so far as it has emerged is a very happy one of natives in full allegiance to the British Crown. When part of New Guinea was re-conquered the Australians took an English officer along to talk to the natives who were highly delighted when the officer told them that when the King-Man's village of London was bombed by the enemy, the King-Man did not run away. He stayed in his village and he was delighted to know that they were in theirs. The natives crowded round and piled high their gifts to the King-Man who to them was a very real person and almost left the white men without adequate words to describe the scene.

The re-conquest of Papua was greatly aided by the natives and one war-correspondent has just written. It was a remarkable sight to see a group of eight or ten natives bringing a wounded Australian back over the Kokoda trail on a rough improvised stretcher made of a blanket and two saplings. Throughout the campaign these stretcher-bearers did a marvellous job. They used to tend their charges with the utmost care and devotion. Many an Australian who was wounded in the initial fighting round Kokoda and in that long rearguard action back to Ioribaiwa owes his life to those quite dusky Papuan natives who carried him by day and took it in turns to sit up with him by night. After a long description of the natives' other work this correspondent concludes. They not only worked well but also the vast majority of them very willingly. Their co-operation speaks volumes of praise for the Papuan Administration especially for that great man—one of the greatest native Administrators the British Empire has ever had—Sir Hubert Murray.

The stories which are leaking out from the Solomon Islands are even more heartening. At the end of May 1943 Lieutenant Colonel William Marchant for three years Commissioner of the Solomon Islands returned to England and something was learned of his work while the Japanese were in the Islands. He said that there were some 93,000 natives in that area and that he was immediately impressed by their whole-hearted loyalty to the British Administration. From the headquarters on Tulagi the Commissioner who was certain the Japs were

coming, perfected a system of secret communications. They acquired Australian-made tele-radios and arranged hiding-places in the bush of each major island. It was through these means that the Americans obtained the information sent from the Islands which enabled them to fight the Battle of the Coral Sea, and although American troops were the first back in the Islands, the natives have no doubt as to where their loyalty lies. Colonel Owen Noel, who is now British Resident Commissioner in the Solomon Islands has many stories to tell of how his Australian and New Zealand officers worked with the natives in the jungle behind the Japanese lines, and how they disrupted Japanese communications and upset their plans by sending them false information.

The most humorous tribute concerning native loyalty to the British Empire appeared in the American magazine, *Fortune*, early in 1944. Describing conditions in the British West Indies where war bases have been leased to the United States, the magazine said: In the winter of 1940-41 well qualified observers reported a widespread desire in the British West Indies, especially among coloured Labour political leaders for the U.S. to take over the island. It was felt that the U.S. would spend more money, pay better wages and that the U.S. would grant political concessions more readily. Now, in 1944 the West Indians no longer want annexation by the U.S. Those who spoke out earlier for American domination are silent.

They would not change a British for an American master even at higher wages. A prominent Briton in Trinidad recently advertised for a chauffeur and received replies from forty applicants, twenty of whom were employed on the American bases but were willing to work for the Briton for less money.

Why is this true? There is a story going the rounds about the negro who was asked how he liked working for the British as compared with the Americans. 'Well,' he said 'the British give you 50 cents and call you Mister. The American gives you a dollar-and-a-half and calls you Hey-George!'

'West Indians after working for three and a half years for and with Americans prefer the British. Having had several years to ponder the choice of more money versus greater dignity, they prefer dignity.'

This statement by an American magazine reminds me of a letter I had from an Englishman working beside Americans in

some of the Pacific Islands. The Americans said this Englishman arrived full of dislike for the British Empire and with every intention of telling the British how to do things. In a short space of time the Americans realised that we have a genius for law and order and for handling other peoples, that no one can rival. As this Englishman put it, there is a world of meaning in the fact that no British Administrator carries a gun.

Our Colonial record is indeed a thing of great pride. A League of Nations Committee reported on British Administration in former German Tanganyika in 1927 in these words:

The Chiefs of Kilimanjaro who for centuries and until the establishment of European rule made ceaseless war on each other and who five years ago would scarcely meet are now grouped in three Councils each of which has a common Treasury and is constituted as a Court of Appeal.

Of British Administration Lord Elton recorded in *St. George and the Dragon* that it has brought great social advances can be seen by comparing Tanganyika with Tibet: that it has been efficient by contrasting the British irrigation system in Egypt with the dams built before 1882 with foreign aid—ten times as expensive and ten times less efficient; that it has been welcome by noting that after Egypt and Iraq had become completely independent and able to choose what administration they pleased they did not dismiss their British officials.

Except T. E. Lawrence Gertrude Bell to whom the Mahomedans gave unique honour knew the Near East better than anyone and this is what she says: Truly we are a remarkable people. We save from destruction remnants of oppressed nations laboriously and expensively giving them sanitary accommodation teaching their children respecting their faiths and all the time cursing at the trouble they are giving us—and they are cursing us not so infrequently for the trouble we are giving them with our meticulous regulations. And then behold when left to themselves they flock to our standards, our simple cheerful self-reliant young officers for their chosen leaders, our regulations for their Decalogue and on all this we gaze without amazement. It is the sort of thing that happens under the British flag.

George Louis Beer, a United States historian, set out to investigate whether we the British benefited as much as other nations from the vast area we opened up to the world in the 19th century. He decided that owing to the policy of non-

exclusion which we deliberately pursued, other nations probably benefited more though they had none of the initial stress and labour. For the 20th century let the figures speak. In 1913 the total imports of the Crown Colonies amounted to £100 million, of which £31 million came from this country, £28 million from other Empire sources and £41 million from foreign countries. By 1930 the total imports had increased to £262 million, £66 million from England, £63 million from other Empire sources and £133 million from foreigners.

The main resolutions adopted by the 40-odd governments at the United Nations' Conference on Food and Agriculture at Hot Springs, Virginia, U.S.A., in 1943, had all been in practice for some years in the British Colonial Empire.

Indeed, for the last 400 years England has not only largely formed, but has entirely revolutionised the world.

No change in all history equals that from a dominantly agricultural, to a dominantly industrial civilisation and, for that change, we are entirely responsible. Between 1760 and 1830 there came in Great Britain alone the vast crowd of inventions and discoveries which we call the Industrial Revolution. We discovered the power of steam and made railways and steamboats, we invented machines, we started factories, we developed industrial towns, we devised new surfaces for roads, we made possible the swift transport of varied foods. In a sentence, during those seventy years, we invented industrial civilisation.

The dominant political factor in the world for the last 400 years has been the growth of the British Empire and the way in which England has defeated every attempt at dominance by any European nation. And now in the day of Europe's decline there emerges the all-importance of the Pacific, the ocean round which the British Empire mainly centres.

Disraeli, in a moment of nothing short of prophetic vision, once said "If ever Europe by her short-sightedness falls into an inferior or exhausted state, for England there will remain an illustrious future. We are bound to the communities of the New World and those great States which our planting and colonising energies have created by ties and interests which will sustain our power, and enable us to play as great a part in the days yet to come as we have done in the past. It is for Europe, not for England, that my heart sinks."

At least twice in the history of England events have so coincided as to look like major miracles, and Disraeli's prophecy refers to both. In the year 1500 King Henry VII also spoke with great vision when he expressed the urgent desire "that my people might turn their backs on the Continent and point their prows towards the setting sun and the Fortunate Isles of the Blest". The first Tudor King's vague poetic phrase, uttered when almost nothing was known of the New World, contained the very essence of England's policy for the next 400 years, and the miraculous coincidence lies in the fact that, between 1509 and 1548, under King Henry VIII and Wolsey, the one policy was formulated which, as long as it succeeded, left England free and potent to spread her unique law (based before the dawn of history on the conception of abstract justice) and her peculiar character (with its absolute love of freedom) about the earth. That policy was known to history as the Balance of Power.

It is quite impossible that either the King or his Minister could have realised (at least from anything less than pure inspiration) that their policy of never allowing any one country to dominate Europe and thus keeping England free would lead to the making of a great part of the New World in her image, and that without that holding of Europe at arms-length, England's distinctive character and freedom could never have been stamped across the North American Continent of which they hardly realised the existence across Australasia then completely unknown and be taken to the Far East where its ultimate consequence would be the rousing of Asia to political consciousness. And there with the rousing of Asia and the aggressiveness of Japan the circle was to be completed, for the unknown quantity of the Asiatic Continent is not so much the powerful Japan as the enigmatic Russia whose vast geographic bulk overlays the entire Continent of Asia. The day has come in which Russia with her army in Outer Mongolia and her advanced Soviets in North China and her assumption that she alone is to decide the frontiers of Eastern Europe, typifies completely the shifting of world interest from West to East, from a group of Powers in Europe to no larger a group of Powers about the world. The mere fact that today the common talk of the future (in some respects inaccurate) is in terms of ourselves, a world power, of Russia preponderantly Asiatic, of America the melting-pot of all races, and

of China, shows how completely the day of Europe as the chalice and centre of civilisation is done

The coinciding of the first small discoveries of the New World with the conception of England's doctrine of the balance of power in Europe, is sufficiently astounding. But what are we to say when we find today, some 400 years later, an equally amazing coinciding of factors, heralded some fifty years before its arrival by Disraeli's speech, which as certainly expressed the essence of the next century, as King Henry VII's phrase foreshadowed the growth of the British Empire in lands which neither he nor any other white man knew!

Some years after Disraeli spoke, two factors arose, one of which he could not possibly have foreseen. The first was the rise of Japan and the stirrings to political consciousness of all Asia after centuries of sleep, though sleep disturbed by anarchic restlessness. And the other, the unpredictable one, was the development of aviation to its present power, for without that invention England could not possibly "play as great a part in the days to come," when the centre of world interest will unquestionably be Asia, and the strategic sea the Pacific which laps so immense a number of British coasts and not the Mediterranean which for 3 000 years, has been the key to the civilised world.

It was of course, in pursuance of our policy of the Balance of Power that we have fought during the centuries every power which has attempted to dominate Europe, for whose dominated Europe could not fail to snatch at the prize of our wealthy north-western island and all the New World that lay within our hands. And, as I wrote in 1940, no country survives an unsuccessful bid for world-domination. Spain, 60 years after the Armada still seemed the Colossus but Elizabeth and Drake had broken her power in 1588 and slowly her decay became palpable and her importance negligible until in the 1930's with the gouging knife of Civil War, she cut her own throat.

In the 17th century the Dutch tried conclusions with us and were defeated and have had no great place in Europe since, and even before 1940 their continued ability to hold their far-flung Colonial Empire was openly questioned.

Under Louis XIV and under Napoleon France sought to dominate Europe. We defeated her and since Waterloo she has swayed betwixt Constitution and Constitution Govern-

ment and Government, viewpoint and viewpoint, to the final disunity of 1940. It is indeed remarkable that, although France has seen no great contest through to victory since her defeat at Waterloo save when we were there to stiffen her, the legend of France as a first-class military power persisted into 1940, and misled our every strategic conception, as well as much of our between-war foreign policy. Similarly today a great part of our Press, exercising its heart rather than its head, assures us that France will rise again as a great power. The French themselves are more realist. Among the French clandestine newspapers of the present is a typical one, well-produced, and named the *Cahiers de la Liberation*. Very recently it stated: 'The complete and brutal defeat of 1940 has not only destroyed the strength of France, it has ruined her prestige as a great power.'

Germany, too, has now twice attempted to dominate Europe, and her second defeat she well knows—and for once truly says—she cannot survive. Even if we were so criminal as to be weak with her after this war, that psychological factor which destroyed Spain, the Dutch and the French must operate more strongly on her since she has less of national character or attainment than any other European country, and her political unity is so very new a thing dating only from 1871.

Our most reliable newspaper reporters have already written home from Italy and Sicily that the most disquieting sign for the future is the absolute lethargy of the people, their complete cynicism in the face of every political question and their desire to have everything settled for them. Typical of Europe as she has increasingly become in the last 150 years they lack both energy and faith.

In Greece, Yugo-Slavia and Poland anarchy already reigns. Group fights with group, and all over Europe the crust of civilisation has worn so thin that it is to be doubted whether anything can preserve it.

Asia, too, is in the throes of return to barbarism, and against this troubled world as the one stable entity there stands the British Empire, an Empire founded on England's character and her ability to unite the contradictory attributes of order and freedom.

Left Wing journalists have lately popularised the absurd suggestion that the French Revolution gave birth to the idea of equal freedom. In hard fact, the French Revolution only



tried to establish in France (and failed) what ordered growth and custom had established in England over a period of more than 2,000 years. A great judge of the 13th century—Justice Bracton—laid it down that the difference of England “from almost all other regions” consisted in her reliance upon unwritten law. Roman and other law was in the last resort the will of the ruler, whether that ruler be individual or committee. In England alone neither King nor Lord nor any reason of State could prevail against anything to which the humblest suitor could convince the Court he had a right. The Judges were there to see that he got it and the uncorruptibility of English Judges is probably the greatest continuous human achievement of all history, as the creation of great law is the demonstration of imaginative realism—the imaginative realism that also runs to invention.

Moreover that law was rooted in this island long before the dawn of recorded history and has defied every Continental influence and every conqueror. In his book, ‘Mother of Freedom’ Claud Golding says, “Britain of course, finally became subject to Rome in A.D. 114, but with special privileges compared with other subject nations. Britain, in fact, retained her own laws and customs. On the subject of these laws and customs, Lord Chief Justice Fortesque, the fifteenth century commentator, discussing the treaty made by Marius, the British monarch, with Trajan, the Roman emperor, remarks—

“In the time of all the different nations and kings who have governed Britain, it has always been governed by the same customs as from the base of its laws at present. If these ancient British laws had not been most excellent, reason, justice and their love of their country, would have induced some of the kings to change or alter them, especially the Romans who ruled all the rest of the world by the Roman laws.”

“That is a most significant statement. Equally significant is the testimony of Sir Winston Churchill, the father of the great Duke of Marlborough, and ancestor of Britain’s war premier. In his *Divi Britannici* he comments that

“The Britons, whether by compact, compromise, or other means, stood, it is evident, in the matter of enjoyment of their own laws and liberties, in a different position towards the Roman government to any other province in the empire. They certainly made such conditions as to keep their own kings, and their own laws.”

In the 15th Century a Frenchman, de Commynes, spoke of England's Parliamentary Government as. "A thing most wise and holy." The peasants of Queen Mary's reign (1553-1558) were well aware where freedom resided. They staged a demonstration in Devonshire with the slogan "We must fight it out or be brought to the like slavery that the Frenchmen are in." At the very end of the 16th Century a Dutchman named Hentzer wrote a book called "Travels in England." In it he said "The English are powerful in the field, successful against their enemies, impatient of anything like slavery. If they see a foreigner very well-made or particularly handsome, they will say 'Tis pity he is not an Englishman'."

"When Voltaire came to England," says Dicey, writing of many years later in his book "The Law of the Constitution,"—"and Voltaire represented the feeling of his age—his predominant sentiment was clearly that he had passed out of a realm of despotism to a land where the laws might be harsh, but where men ruled by law and not by caprice." Such is England's age-long history developed over more than two thousand years before the French Revolution, and that ordered liberty and great law we have, to the inestimable advantage of the world, bequeathed to the British Empire and also in lesser degree to the United States. Where they have made changes from our law, theirs is unquestionably the poorer.

In view of all this can any person of normal reasoning power suggest why leadership should pass from the British Empire centred in England once England is herself again?

In 1942 Mr Philip Guedalla asked what Hitler had done to Sydney, Auckland, Johannesburg or Accra that their exasperated denizens should travel all the way to Bardia or Addis Abbaba to bar his way? That is the riddle of the British Empire to which no enemy has found the answer."

No enemy, but many citizens of the Empire sprung of divers race and creed have found deep assent within themselves to Lord Rosebery's words "How marvellous it all is! Growing as trees grow, while others slept, led by the faults of others as well as by the character of our fathers, reaching with the ripple of a resistless tide over islands and continents until our little Britain woke up to find herself the foster-mother of nations and the source of United Empires. Do we not hail in this less the energy and fortune of the race than the supreme direction of the Almighty?"

Certainly English Governments have done little to aid and much to hinder the growth of the British Empire so that if so colossal a world-force came into being by accident, then all is accident. Many were the restrictive attempts, such as Pitt's India Act of 1784 which forbade the East India Company to acquire any more territory in India. But the Mahrattas and other warrior adventurers plundered both peasants and townsmen and, against the will of England's Government, England's men had to act. "New Zealand was another example of spontaneous colonisation by the British subjects against the wish of the British Government" writes Mr Williamson in his Oxford pamphlet on 'The Life and Growth of the British Empire,' and it is above all things to be noted that the British Empire was not the outcome of intolerable conditions at home for social conditions were at all times ahead of those of Europe and religious persecution infinitely less. The days of Elizabeth represent a peak of England's history. Why then save because it was in them and they must, should the English have left the loveliness of their own shores at a peak of their own history to lose their lives in the Atlantic and voyaging to the Far East, or founding settlements in North America. Certainly we did not go as did the European peoples, to free ourselves from intolerable political conditions or religious persecution, true there were the Pilgrim Fathers but they were untypical and only left England after decades of our expansionist effort.

No this Empire which has drawn the like minded to itself, is England's genius translated into fact. It is the lives and deaths of many knit into a unity of States. It is a human creation and a human refuge beside which no international body has or can have any appeal.

An international organisation at very best commands the allegiance of the intellect alone but it is not the intellect by which men live. It is certainly not for an intellectual conception alone that men will die. Yet to be worth living for and living by, a thing must be worth dying for.

Nothing in this life is static it waxes or it wanes and the British Empire must dwindle to doom, or become immeasurably greater.

It must become immeasurably greater by the sheer pressure of world events for in the cataclysm which is only now begin-

ning all men will turn to, and as many as possible will cling to the one stable political entity of our time

The British Empire has a territory of over 14 million square miles, and it has a population of over 500 million. Of the States now mentioned as the world powers it is the only one with any continuous and ordered history, indeed the only one that is not an affair of this century. Russia, as we know her, dates from 1917 and has still not concluded her political evolution. The United States of America has not yet achieved nationhood and China is no nearer finding nationhood than she has been in 4 000 years.

Therefore there is no question as to where lies the hope of the world—the one hope of the world for ordered life and stability, and for new ways and new means, for England's output of inventive genius in this war has been greater than that of any other country and it is only our politicians who still have not risen to the heights of their opportunity.

This is the inspiration which will carry us back to Singapore—and much further. Without the fullest knowledge of this inspiration there will be no return of the British to Singapore and that most definitely means a failure of order throughout the world.

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